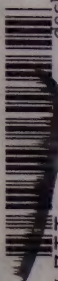


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PEREGRINE P A P E R S

A TALE OF TRAVEL IN THE ORIENT

BY

W. H. T. SQUIRES, M. A., D. D.

Author of "Acadie Days," etc.

W. H. T. Squires

To My Wife

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PEREGRINE PAPERS

I.

ROMEO AND JULIET.



AMONG THE AZORES.

The Next Day We Floated in a Veritable Paradise.

I had noticed her on deck, from time to time, as we tossed over the weltering waves of the wide Atlantic. She was a queenly matron of those calmer days which follow the ardent

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years of youth. The beautiful girl who traveled with her must be her daughter, I thought. Alas, how near the truth my guess, and how far!

Not until the afternoon of the last day she was aboard did I speak with her. The Azores began to unfold from the mists on our eastern horizon. I thought the whitish banks above the violet sea masses of deceptive clouds, hanging low. She volunteered the opinion, in the enthusiasm of the moment, that it was land: and a glad sight, too, for sea-wearied eyes. And she was right. How did she know? Why are women always right, provokingly right, when they argue with men?

The young lady went into raptures over Mount Pica. And she had reason. All of us joined in her superlatives.

"The magnificent mountain is 7,613 feet high," I volunteered.

"Men do know something, after all," she said with a bewitching smile. "Now how did you know that?"

"Oh, Baedeker the Blessed told me. He is my bosom companion," I replied. "But I will make one original remark. Pica, a perfect cone, sweeping toward heaven with symmetrically graceful curves, looks like pictures of Fujiyama, the sacred mountain of Japan—though only about half as high."

Conversation died, for the barren, rocky slopes of the mountain took on all the hues of a maple leaf bitten by the keen frosts of a Canadian autumn. From deep, royal purple, where the white waves lashed the naked rocks at its base, through all shades and tints of violet and crimson to a crown of pure gold, shining against the deep blue of the sky, Pica

was touched with heavenly glory by the low, descending sun. Ah, all the tedium and tossing of a weary week was lost to memory before the sunset glory of Mount Pica!

"I am so glad to reach Horta," said the lady. "My son Guy is vice-consul there. He does not know we are coming. Tomorrow is his birthday. He will be twenty-four. Is not this an adventure for an old woman like me? We will walk, unannounced, into his office tomorrow morning and ask for an interview!" She laughed a low, musical laugh.

"Your speech betrayeth you," I answered. "The way you pronounce 'Guy' convinces me that you are a Virginian."

"Well, what if I am? I am not ashamed of it, I hope. I am from Richmond." The indescribable accent with which she said "Richmond" amused me. It was so familiar.

"It seems to me that I once heard of Richmond," I replied. "It is a small, inland town about one hundred miles west of Norfolk, is it not? And the young lady is your daughter. Guy will welcome his lovely sister, no doubt—so will all the gay, young blades of Horta, I'll wager."

"She is not my daughter—yet." There was an unmistakable significance in the adverb.

"A romance! A Virginian romance culminating joyously under the amethystine shadows of Pica!" I cried with delight.

"Yes, they have been sweethearts since they attended John Marshall together."

"Attended John Marshall?" I asked in surprise. "Why the great jurist has been in his grave a century, and the girl doesn't look a day over twenty."

"You are stupid," she retorted with spirit,

"or you think I am. I refer to the Richmond High School, and you know it."

Our vessel was surrounded now by a multitude of row boats and launches of all sizes and descriptions. The energetic Portuguese were shouting to those upon deck to come down and be rowed ashore. As soon as possible I offered myself, a willing victim, and was soon upon the streets of the quaint, little town.

Even in the darkness one could feel the foreign influence. Tiny kerosene lamps at the street corners made the darkness denser. The streets are but lanes, roughly paved with cobblestones. Stuccoed houses stand stiffly against narrow sidewalks. The men wear jaunty, Spanish costumes; the women great, black cloaks, with immense hoods supported over their heads. They look like huge question-marks.

Soldiers are everywhere. The Portuguese republic is young, and in a precarious condition.

Three gentlemen left their wine in answer to my question addressed them first in English, then in French. The post-office was just ahead on the same street, impossible to miss it.

Two squares further along I saw Juliet, an adorable type of Portuguese beauty. She stood on a balcony, a dream of loveliness in silk and lace, the light streaming over her shoulders from wide French windows. Romeo stood in the street below. He was so handsome I did not blame Juliet. And she was so lovely, I could but envy Romeo. His suit was cut in the most approved American fashion.

Her father was sitting in the parlor, reading the news, all unconscious of the detail he

made in the interesting scene. The lovers talked in whispers, for the gallery hung just above Romeo's head.

They saw my interest, and Romeo stepped back into the deeper shadow of the wall. I had not the heart to interrupt so fair a romance, so I waved a blessing to them and passed on, letter in hand.

When I returned, a few minutes later, I watched for the house. Romeo had a ladder against the wall. Juliet descended and, with the ladder under one arm and the girl under the other, he retreated hastily into the darkness of a side street.

Gladly would I have tarried in the quaint, little town, but I feared our ship might leave, so I returned to the waiting pirates and was soon on deck again. Our ship gave a long, wierd whistle that sounded like a groan of agony. As she hoisted her anchors a steam launch thrust its nose under her bulkheads. The stairs were lowered, and a girl and man climbed aboard. Bless my heart, it was Romeo and Juliet! They hurried to their stateroom, we cleared the harbor, and stood toward Porta del Garda, the metropolis of the Azores, a day's journey eastward.

Next day we floated in a veritable fairyland; schools of whales sent up fountains of salt spray, sharks could be seen at rare intervals, and porpoises all the time. The islands are a paradise for birds of varied and gorgeous plumage. For miles farms, orchards and villages, mountains and valleys were always in view.

But, as interesting as was this panorama of land and sea, I could not keep my thoughts nor my eyes from Romeo and Juliet. They

were so happy, so radiantly oblivious of all the world besides!

As we swung around a sharp promontory and approached Porta del Garda I had my only opportunity. Romeo was alone, for a moment. He leaned over the rail smoking a cigarette.

"It is beautiful," I observed (as a fisherman casts a fly). I wondered whether he could speak English.

"Very," he replied.

"I thought perhaps you were Portuguese, though you look like an American."

"I am an American," laconically.

"You are a man of good taste. May I offer my congratulations. You put it over well. I wonder if Dad is still reading the news?"

He started, frowned, then decided to make the best of it, and smiled.

"You seem a right wise guy."

I started in my turn and looked at him narrowly.

"You are a Virginian."

"What business is that of yours?"

"It is none of my business. I never interfere with the affairs of other people. I have no desire to intrude upon yours, but I know something that I think you ought to know."

"I never laid eyes on you before in my life," he retorted, "and I cannot imagine how you could know anything of my private affairs."

"Oh, yes you have laid eyes on me. I waved to you last night while your bride hung over the balcony."

"Was that really you? I had forgotten the incident."

"This is your birthday. You are twenty-four today."

"You are a wizard."

"Not at all. You are from Richmond. You were educated at the John Marshall High School. Nor were you the only person educated there. The school is co-educational. There were many pretty girls—one in particular, to whom you were engaged when you became vice-consul at Horta. Your name is Guy."

His astonishment was obvious. His cheek flushed. He said not a word, but smoked hard.

"Your mother is in Horta. She came on this ship. She expected to give you a birthday surprise this morning at your office. She did not travel alone. A young lady from Richmond was with her, whom she said was not her daughter—yet. Forgive me, but if our positions were reversed, as man to man, I would appreciate this bit of romantic information from you. Best wishes, good-bye, and good luck to both."

The ship's wireless operator and I were good friends. He was a young Frenchman, who looked like the pictures one sees of Lord Byron. The picture in which the poet wears a hunting shirt open at the neck. The lad had no idea who Lord Byron was, but he seemed to like the compliment when I called him "Lord Byron," which I did always.

I stepped in to ask him how long we would likely remain at Porta del Garda.

"See this," he said.

I picked up the message, written in French, and read:

"Acceptez ma resignation. Notifiez Washington. J'ai accepte' situation a' Lisbonne avec la Standard Oil Compagnie."

Guy W. Baskerville.

II. THE GOLDEN TAGUS.



"Lisbon rises from the river's side tier on tier.
The houses tiptoe to gaze over the roofs
of those below."

The little mountain land flung to the westernmost extremity of Europe was called Lusitania. Though Spain crowds its narrow boundaries, this land is not Spanish, has never been, and will never be; for the Portuguese are a more virile and aggressive race than their long-time neighbors and inveterate rivals.

Lusitania's chief city was Olisipo; shortened now to Lisbon. Some enthusiastic antiquarians claim that it was founded by a grandson of Abraham, thirty-two centuries before Christ, upon these hills beside the magnificent estuary of Tagus. Of Abraham's grandson we know not, but all historians agree that the Phoenicians came sailing boldly through the Gates of Hercules, rounded the Rock of Lisbon, and made this vast Iberian peninsula their own.

The Phoenicians were the sons of Canaan,

grandson of Noah. The Old Testament teems with references to them as Syrians, Canaanites, Baalites, Tyrians and others. They were the most powerful enemies of the Hebrews. After the Phoenicians came the Carthagenians, another designation for the same bold blood. Rome then flung the mantle of her culture over the peninsula and completely stifled the older, Oriental civilization.

Vandals and Goths came plundering across the Pyrenees and the Moors came from the straits of Africa, bringing again to Lusitania the culture of the Orient, and the breath of the desert. When the Crusaders finally expelled them modern Portugal was born.

A tinge of Tyrian blood evidently survived the wrecks of centuries, for history knows no bolder discoverers nor sailors than the Portuguese.

Vasca da Gama was twenty-two years old when Columbus discovered America. Five years later he sailed from Lisbon, standing consistently southward until he discovered and named the Cape of Good Hope and opened the water route to India and the gorgeous East. The navigator spent his last night before the epoch-making voyage on a hill that rises above the Tagus west of Lisbon. King Manuel, the Fortunate, his patron, vowed that he would erect a magnificent convent here if da Gama returned safely. The Monastery of St. Gerome stands today a memorial of da Gama's success, and of Manuel's piety and fidelity. It is the Westminster Abbey of Portugal. Under its rich canopies and in its vaulted aisles the precious dust of Portugal is gathered. King Manuel and da Gama sleep here side by side. So does John III., who

founded the vast colony of Brazil. Katherine of Braganza, the neglected queen of Charles II. of England, was laid here after a long widowhood. Camoes, whose matchless genius preserved da Gama's fame in the "Lusiad," lies here among kings. Camoes (whom the English call "Cam-owens" and the Portuguese call "Cah-mongeesh") was of noble birth; but he had a love quarrel, joined the army, fought a duel and lost an eye. Then he was banished to India for wounding an officer in another fight. Years after he returned to Lisbon, lived and died in poverty and neglect. His great poem was begun in India and finished in a humble cottage at Lisbon. Its success was deservedly great; but it came too late to be of much benefit to the author. However, it secured him a splendid place of sepulture, a fine statue and an elegant square called by his name. It recalls the sarcastic remark of Robert Burns' mother, "Bobbie asked you for bread and ye gave him a stane."

These were the golden days of Lisbon. She became the leading mart of Europe. All Christendom came to her wharves to buy silk, tea, coffee, spices and other products of the Orient. Brazil, too, poured her wealth upon the banks of Tagus and Lisbon was all that Venice had been and London is. But the foundations were too narrow for the superstructure.

Philip of Spain took over rebellious Portugal, and from Lisbon the Spanish Armada sailed to conquer England, humble Elizabeth, and uproot the Protestant religion of the doughty, little isle. The Pope added his gracious blessing to the enterprise, but God sent the storms of the North, and by His help the British tars did the rest. Joy over Philip's

defeat was only less great on the Tagus than on the Thames, for it marked the beginning of the decline of Spanish dominion which has continued unchecked to this day.

As one sails up the river he is struck by the painfully bare and naked aspect of the countryside. The fields and mountain slopes look as if they had been burnt over. Trees, there are none; and the soft, green verdure of the British isles is sadly lacking.

Mouldering old castles, romantic ruins of feudal days, crown the hilltops, little villages thicken, and beautiful estates become more frequent as one approaches the city.

Lisbon rises from the river's side, tier on tier. The houses on each street and terrace tiptoe to gaze over the roofs of those below. The panorama is very splendid and very beautiful, for the houses are white and here, at least, there is enough foliage to give the needed touch of color.

Our ship dropped anchor in the river and soon our steps were upon the substantial granite quays of Black Horse Square, one of the handsomest in all Europe. But the memories of two tragedies haunt the site. The king's palace was here before the fearful earthquake of 1755. Multitudes fled from the narrow, crowded streets to the royal gardens for safety. But here they met the very fate they sought to escape, for the river rose and fell, with the earth, in the most remarkable fashion. Ships were left high and dry on the river bed, rocks at the bottom of the harbor never seen before or since appeared to sight. The river overflowed all the lower parts of the city, sweeping away thousands, and among them all those in the royal gardens. The banks rose

again and the waters fled back to their accustomed place. This was repeated several times during the frightful convulsions.

When Lisbon painfully arose from ruin, the palace was not rebuilt and the grounds became this square, in the midst of which stands an equestrian statue of King Joseph I. on a black horse.

Here King Carlos and his eldest son were assassinated, February 1, 1908. In the golden age of the Sixteenth Century, the royal house produced an able line of kings. But, alas, for a century the House of Braganza had not known a manly man, either in Brazil or Portugal. Brazil expelled the family first (1889). Had Carlos possessed wit and wisdom he might have heeded the hint from Brazil. For nineteen years he held the sceptre with fat, feeble hands. The kingdom was bankrupt and finances grew ever more desperate. The voluptuous king lent an ever-open ear to the clerical party. Catholic politicians had not a little share in bringing the monarch to his doom. The story has not been told candidly. Perhaps it cannot be told safely, even yet.

The dead king's second son, Manuel, a youth of nineteen, then in Paris, was immediately proclaimed king. The character of the prince was not reassuring, but he was young and popular, and all true patriots hoped for the best. Like his late father he was fat and voluptuous. Though still young scandalous stories had been whispered about his pleasures in gay Paris. Manuel, the Unfortunate, had a brilliant opportunity. He had some of the blood of Henry of Navarre in his veins. Had he but found something of the spirit of that plumed

knight! Instead he was fully and completely the son of his father.

"Gabriella of the Lilies" was, ten years since, the queen of light comedy. She came up from her native town of Marseilles and took even Paris by storm. She was as beautiful as Mary Stuart, as shrewd and hard as Elizabeth, and as unprincipled as Catherine de Medici, the three ladies who worried old John Knox. Gabriella came to America and in New York she received \$1,000 a night for singing and dancing ten minutes. Such is our wealth, and our taste. Gaby Claire Deslys had "but one idea, she talked nothing but cash," under her velvet touch "she was as hard as nails." It was her dainty, little foot that tipped the crown off the youthful head of Manuel the Unfortunate. She demonstrated to Portugal and the world that the House of Braganza was impossible.

On the night of October 4, 1910, a handful of soldiers in Lisbon proclaimed a republic. The sailors of a battleship lying in the Tagus ran up the rebel flag and opened fire on the great, square, marble palace that adorns the western suburbs of the city, lying conspicuously above the gothic ruins of the Tower of Belem. The young king and his mother fled to the English at Gibraltar. Just before the outbreak of the great war, Manuel, still young, married a Hohenzollern. He enjoys the hospitality of England to this day and the republic pays him a pension to remain out of Portugal. Like an abler king long centuries before him, Manuel was weighed in the balance, and found wanting.

III. ON CLASSIC SEAS.



**"High over all the ancient ruins and blatant rivals
of modern times rises the exquisite
Parthenon."**

The human heart is stirred to its profoundest depths when one gazes upon the classic shores of Greece. Thoughts that lie too deep for tears rise unbidden as one sails the seas and sets foot upon the shores that have been historic from the remotest periods of recorded history. He would be stolid indeed who could look unmoved upon the barren beaches of the Peloponnesus or gaze without emotion upon the plains of Attica. To sail these sunlit seas is to realize history. To walk these roads and climb these mountain sides is to live again the drama of a deathless past.

Every inlet suggests a struggle by sea or land. Around every headland gather myths of gods and goddesses, or sober stories of authentic history. Here warriors have contended, orators pleaded, poets sung, athletes trained,

sculptors labored, teachers starved, musicians swept their lyres, apostles preached, conquerors triumphed, statesmen planned, doges sailed, sultans ruled, and still the web of history is weaving. For the shadowy procession of the mighty still passes.

Every island, city, mountain, province, plain, cape and bay has its story of splendid achievement. Here the learning, language, laws, literature, architecture, sculpture, painting, oratory and statescraft of the world developed to classic perfection. It is astonishing that Greece, so small a land (not so large as Massachusetts), and Athens in her prime, so small a city (smaller than fifty American cities of today) should have produced such an array of genius. These people were always poor, always torn by dissension and cursed by divided counsels. Ages have passed since their chief work was done—and yet their achievements have never been excelled and remain the standard of the world.

We boast our modern civilization and superior scientific achievements. It is true that in the development of material things the ancient peoples were as children. But for all our efforts the ethics that came out of Judea, the art that came out of Athens, and the jurisprudence that came out of Rome have never been excelled.

"What point of land is that?" I asked in broken French, as our good ship rounded a bold promontory of naked rock and dull red sand.

"Cape Malea."

This is the easternmost of three long fingers that the Peloponnesus throws into the southern sea. From this rock Spartan sentinels

gazed for generations over the ocean, which they could never control. Their little city lay just over the hills, tucked in a covert of the mountains. Cape Malea and all the Greek islands looked like forsaken brick kilns. No trees, not even bushes, relieve these barren shores. No land is beautiful without trees, and no land can be rich, prosperous or happy where trees do not grow. Greece was not always thus denuded. The unspeakable Turk has left his curse upon these eastern lands, though now long free.

But man's misery lays no blight upon the heaving bosom of the ocean. The opalescent seas smile as sweetly in the sunshine as when the Caesars or Cleopatra sailed upon them. Lord Byron, who loved these sterile shores so well, exclaimed, "Man marks the earth with ruin, his control stops with the shore."

We skirted the rocky coast of Argolis and passed the island of Aegina to port. Every eye now searched the dim horizon to starboard, eager for the first glimpse of Cape Sunium and the mountains of Attica. At last we were rewarded—Mount Hymettus, modern Athens, the Piraeus and the Acropolis came slowly into view.

Modern Athens is building handsomely beside the ruins of the old city. Apartment houses that look like Chicago are conspicuous here and there. The palace of King Constantine, the royal gardens and the government buildings can be seen from the harbor. A mere glance at these structures was sufficient, for the temples upon the Acropolis, bathed in the glory of the descending sun, riveted our attention. High over all ancient ruins and blatant

rivals of modern times rose the exquisite Parthenon.

As we neared the Piraeus unusual excitement was evident ashore. Flags were flying from every housetop, bands were playing, and soldiers marching along the quays. The church bells were ringing. Some told their joy in notes, deep and solemn; some cracked and rasping joined the chorus. I suggested that King Constantine had ordered this ovation in honor of the distinguished Americans who were to spend a few hours in his little kingdom, but my modest fellow travelers received the suggestion coolly. The king's pro-German sympathies during the late war, and his treatment of that great statesman, Venizelos, have dampened my ardor for his majesty. He sits even now on a throne none too secure. When the Greek officers came aboard the news came with them. The Greeks had won a notable victory in Asia Minor over Mustopha Kemal Pasha and the Turkish Nationalists the day before.

Near our ship were three great vessels, once Japanese merchant vessels, with their Japanese names still painted on their bows, crowded to the limit with Turks. There could be no mistake about those heads, beards, trousers and the general aspect of the wretched men. Our ship carried hundreds of Oriental passengers in her ample steerage. Enthusiastic communication in harsh Arabic was quickly established. With the Turks were sixty Syrians, forced into war, captured by Russia and held since 1915 in the interior of that vast country. Turkey had besought the aid of the Bolsheviki in her latest war with the Greeks and these three ships were sent across the Black Sea.

But the Greek navy was alert and they were captured. They had merely exchanged a Russian prison pen for a prison ship unspeakably crowded and vile. Many messages were shouted to our fellow-passengers, who promised to transmit them to friends and relatives in Damascus and the Lebanons. This, they said, was the first chance that they had had to communicate with their people at home since the war began.

Late that night our ship prepared to depart. Her powerful engines throbbed in her hold, the warning bells were rung and whistles sounded.

A Syrian prisoner slipped off his rags, climbed down the rigging of the prison ship and dropped quietly into the sea. He did the trick well. But, alas, he was detected and the searchlight was turned full upon him as he swam toward our ship. A rope was lowered from steerage and the prisoner climbed on board with the agility of a cat. His rescuers stowed him away and a physician tended his cuts and bruises.

Greek officers called our vessel to halt, and came aboard. They took their man and marched him back to the prison ship, not however until the poor fellow had told his story in our sympathetic ears.

He was a native of the village of Jemhur that hangs like a martin's nest on the lofty spurs of Lebanon over Beyrout. He had labored in the vineyards since early childhood, and by dint of thrift and perseverance had bought two acres of stony land. These he terraced and planted to vines with his own hands. Mariette had promised to marry him when his stone cabin was finished. The foundations were laid by the roadside, and then,

alas, the war clouds swept over the land. He was twenty-one and life held the cup of happiness full to the brim. He feared that the Turks would force him into service; so Mariette had promised to marry him at once. The Greek father joined them after early mass; and they came from the little church just as the brilliant sun climbed above the steepest ridges of Lebanon. At the door a Turkish captain met them and placed him under arrest. In vain he pleaded for one day, and in vain the priest pledged his word that Amin would report at dawn tomorrow in Beyrout. One of the soldiers struck him over the head with his scabbard. At sight of his flowing blood his bride screamed and fainted, and so they dragged him from her arms. It was to Beyrout, then to Erzerum in Asia-Minor, then to Kars where the entire company was captured by the Russians and marched to Astrakhan. Seven years had passed. As Amin lay there under the physician's skillful fingers he looked a man of fifty. In the eternity of bitterness, sorrow and suffering that had passed over him since September, 1914, he had not received one word, nor had he been able to send a message.

"As I slipped down the rigging of the prison ship I saw the pallid face of my bride as she lay by the door of the chapel at Jemhur, and I prayed the Blessed Virgin and the Child Christ to help me thus to escape, or if not to let me sink to the bottom of the sea and end this unspeakable agony."

IV.

THE GATES OF LEBANON.

Cyprus slipped behind us before the sun went down. The coast of Syria was just below the dim horizon. Night settled still and sultry. The light breeze that blew off the sea suggested the breath of the desert. For hours I tossed in my narrow quarters. Long after midnight I crept forth upon the deserted deck. The gibbous moon gave a ghastly light. The steerage passengers lay asleep in heaps upon the deck below. In the weird light they reminded one of corpses that one sees in pictures of battlefields. The engines throbbed monotonously. The nauseating odor of stale disinfectants, which we had breathed for four long weeks, seemed never so disgusting as that last, long night.

At last the sun sent a few streaks of light through the eastern mists and with these harbingers of dawn he rose quickly, an orb of magnificent, brilliant red. As I watched the splendor of his regal glory I understood why Ben-Hadad, Hiram and Hannibal worshipped him. Of all idolators the Baalites had most reason.

The harbor of Beyrout is painfully inadequate. Yet, poor as it is, it is the best between Alexandria and Alexandretta. The Syrian coast is rising. Tyre, once an island, stands at the head of a peninsula, and the causeway thrown across the strait by Alexander the Great stands forth upon dry land now in grim mockery of the ancient engineers.

For three hours the impatient passengers, baggage in hand, anxious to depart, hung over

the rail. It is the same queer psychology that is exhibited aboard trains. A long line stands impatiently first on one foot then on the other for miles before the station is reached. One wonders why.



A Mediaval Corner in Modern Beyrout.

The anchor slipped noisily into the mud and our ship swung gracefully to rest. It was a signal and an invitation. The arrival of a passenger ship from America is an important event. From every nook and corner of the harbor little boats put forth. Of all conceivable shapes and sizes, propelled by steam

and gasoline, but mostly by the simple process of human hand they came. It was a water carnival such as one sees nowhere else to such fine advantage. They swarmed about our bulkheads like ants on a lump of sugar! Some were dressed in cast off clothes of European cut, some in nature's own nut-brown garb, some in long pongee gowns, which in no wise impeded their agility, some in the baggy trousers of the Turk, some in elegant sashes around faded wrappers of nondescript material, some in the once brilliant uniforms of army or navy, Syrian, Turkish and French, some in bright gold and braid with their business noted on their hat bands, many wore fezzes and turbans, many carried fans and parasols, many sat upon Oriental rugs of elegant design and texture thrown carelessly into filthy boats.

As they advanced upon their victims they set up weird, incisive cries. If every one of the two hundred had been an expert auctioneer, with a megaphone voice and lungs of brass, and if some vast treasure had been offered the longest, loudest, most persistent caller the screaming could not, I judge, have been greater.

To add to their zest collisions were frequent, and consequently quarrels and fights were no mean feature of the morning. I thought one half-grown boy had been killed when a rival knocked him over the head with a club and he fell limply into the water. It seemed that I was more concerned than need be, for they fished him out and soon he was screaming and calling as lustily as before.

"What is the reason for this hubbub?" I asked a Syrian from New York.

"Just advertising," he replied. "That one

is calling his hotel, this one a cheap boarding house. Several are offering to ferry passengers to land for only two dollars American. That man is making a political speech, extolling the French mandate, while those to the extreme right are denouncing France and demanding an independent Syria. You see those selling fruits, slippers, carpets and tobacco. That boy is telling you where to buy phonographs. This man under us is offering to exchange money at about 25 per cent. discount. Thomas Cook, the American Express, and the government railways are represented by their agents."

We threaded the carnival safely and landed at the foot of a handsome customs house. All passengers pass into the street through a large iron gate. That step transports one backward a thousand years in a moment of time. Look about! Camels patiently plodding after their drivers, donkeys loaded beyond belief, every vista reminds one that he treads the dust of long dead dynasties and stands amid the ruins of extinct civilizations. A strong, young man in a long, dirty silk dress, was selling an ice-cold drink which he drew from a goat skin skillfully poised on his shoulders. We tried the beverage, licorice water, but though it was both wet and cold we could not drink. A crowd of filthy, naked urchins at once volunteered, and after a scuffle one swallowed it at a gulp with an air of triumph and satisfaction. Across the way a sleepy, old man sat in the dust by the roadside selling prickly pears and cucumbers. He used old horseshoes and even rocks as weights. Had Tancred with his mace, Saladin on his Arabian charger, or Richard Coeur de Lion with his battle-axe ridden forth

they would not have been incongruous to their setting in this Levantine scene. In fact some scenes and customs belong to the years marked B. C. Beyrout is a city of great and growing importance. Here the Orient meets the Occident, each with much benefit to the other. Crosses and minarets rise side by side. There are handsome boulevards with fine Parisian limousines upon them, and just around the corner caravans of camels are folding their long, ungainly legs after a sixty-day march from Bagdad or the fastnesses of Arabia.

At the edge of town a fine Franco-Turkish military road begins at once its climb to the passes of Lebanon. Each turn lifts the traveler higher, and each pause discloses a view more extensive, comprehensive and interesting. Handsome country estates everywhere abound, elegant gardens, rich vineyards and numerous groves of mulberry trees closely pruned after the manner of the country.

It is evident that these steep hillsides have been terraced with care to keep the soil from washing away and exposing the naked rock. Here and there little homes stood vacant and tenantless. The young men who lived in them had been forced into the Turkish army in 1914 and had never returned. Dead most of them, no doubt are, but I thought of the poor fellows rotting in the prison ship at the Piraeus, and perhaps others may be eeking out a hopeless existence in some Bolshevik camp of Siberia.

Syria is more prosperous than she has been in centuries. There is surely poverty here, but at the elegant hotel as I watched the wealthy Syrians in full evening dress pouring their champagne and conversing with women who

wore brilliant diamonds and ropes of pearls, I felt embarrassed at my dusty, rusty, travel-worn exterior. I thought of the heartrending pictures of starving Syrians that appeared in our papers last spring. Throughout Syria, Palestine, Egypt, I challenged our party of twenty to say that they had seen one hungry man, woman or child. The only hunger-smitten wretches we saw were the Americans with whom we traveled.

V.

A ROMANCE OF BAALBEK.

With considerable difficulty I located the postoffice in Baalbek. That useful institution is located in a vacant dwelling on the second floor front. The postmater, who also attends to all other departments, was so busy writing a letter in queer Arabic hand from right to left that he was deaf to my request for stamps in English and French. Had I been a wild, bad man I could have made off with his cash-box, and all valuables.

I watched the black tassel on his fez wag for some time, then stepped forth upon a little iron balcony hung conveniently over "Main Street." The brilliant Syrian sun beat down upon the road that lay ankle deep in lime dust as white as powder.

I thought my presence was unobserved, but the flash of an eye from the jalousies of a casement opposite reminded me that in the Orient one is always under observation.

At last the red fez finished his letter, folded, sealed, stamped, directed it and assigned it to a proper pigeon-hole. He then turned to me deliberately and with a smile.

"You can hold your job in Baalbek, but you couldn't hold it a week in America." I volunteered rather testily.

"It is well," he replied.

"Oh, yes, it is just as well that you do not understand a word I say."

"Ah, it is well," he agreed.

"Is there anything you want, sir?" The speaker was a lad of fifteen. Orientals have a curious way of appearing and disappearing.

"What I want, young man, would fill a Sears-Roebuck catalogue."

"Ah," injected the red fez, "that is well."

"All Americans see village baker, carpenter and skilful women in lace shops."

"You speak English well. What do you charge?" I asked.

"I ask not silver. It is great desire to me to speak the English good. I learn him in British school."

The baker is an acrobat. He flings a bit of dough about his head until it is as large as a picture hat, flaps it into a stone oven, turns it in a twinkling, and draws it forth with great dexterity.

Meantime my lad had disappeared and reappeared.

"My mother presents invitation to come to house." I declined his unexpected hospitality, but saw instantly that I had made a *faux pas*.

"I'll stop a moment and speak to your mother." We entered a poor garden thickly strewn with fragments of broken pillars, bits of ancient marble exquisitely carved and even pieces of statuary.

The house was scrupulously clean, but showed unmistakably the pinch of poverty. A display of hand-made lace lay conspicuously on a table.

"My sister sells it sometimes to terminate education at mission school in Beyrout. Would you like to view her?"

"I would be delighted to meet her and to buy some of her lace." I understood now the lad's tactful way of helping the family fortune.

When the girl entered I was astonished at

her beauty. I thought of Dean Farrar's description of Mary of Bethany. Her braided hair was as dark as a raven's wing, her eyes



"Six great pillars dominate the landscape. As one approaches Baalbek they raise their stately heads above the flat houses and surrounding trees."

soft and lustrous, her skin was fair and her manner ever so gentle. She served black Turkish coffee from a Damascus tray. I bought a

bit of lace and promised to commend it to others. When she left the room I said to the lad, "Your sister is very attractive."

"My sister is very full of grief, sir, but it is a pity she is—what do you call it?—an olden maid. Alas, she is nineteen, and no husband yet!"

"Is that really such a misfortune?"

"She loves a young man, but unfortunately he is very rich. His father owns twenty-five acres of land."

"Very rich?" I asked. "I'll warrant that would not disqualify him in America with any girl, or her people."

"Ah, we are very poor. Khlal is such hugely fine fellow. We all love him dearly. But his father has betrothed him to a Jewess near Aleppo, very rich girl. He will run to America, if his father make constant persistence. Khlal is very old, too, twenty-one. He wants my sister to run with him. But she will not; she is too heroic. My sister wills to get education, be olden maid and make great teacher. Don't you think it?"

I assured him that I did think it. I bade him good-bye and turned my steps toward the famous Acropolis.

There are some spots on earth that men have in all ages deemed sacred. Baalbek is one such. Here the Syrians worshipped the sun before the days of Father Abraham.

When Rome became mistress of the world, she rebuilt a magnificent group of temples upon the massive foundations of the ancient Baalites. A gigantic temple of Jupiter, one of the richest and largest in all the world crowned the crest of the Acropolis while the smaller

temple of Bacchus, nearby, was only less sumptuous, if not less beautiful.

These exquisite ruins rose plainly on the hilltop before me, yet every avenue of approach seemed closed. A young man in a straw hat (a most unusual decoration for an oriental head) approached and said pleasantly:

"You are going to the Propylaea, I see."

"My dear sir," I replied, "if you know where I am going it's more than I know. These rock walls, irrigation ditches and blind alleys have conspired against me. But permit me to ask what you are doing with a straw hat on your head. I did not suppose there was one in all Syria."

"I am an American," he answered proudly. "I was born in Buffalo, N. Y., the day after President McKinley was shot."

"Great heavens! I hope there was no connection between two such important events!"

"I had forgotten how to speak English until the British soldiers came. Then it came back to me. But you do not speak English like them. You speak it like my father."

I smiled my acknowledgments at this rather doubtful compliment. I told him I would be glad to have him guide me through the ruins and promised to render a tip. Again I saw that I had said the wrong thing.

"I do not want any tip," he said proudly, "but if you will correct my English I shall be pleased."

My new found friend was a handsome, manly young fellow. He was so intelligent, quick, apt, courteous and agreeable that my heart instinctively warmed to him. For all his boasted birth in Buffalo he was typically Syrian.

We passed under the laden fruit trees and climbed cautiously where once a magnificent flight of marble stairs led to the great eastern doors of the temple. The portals are sadly broken now, but they are so lofty, so vast and in such fine proportion and rich ornamentation that one feels a thrill of wonder and of awe. Even more so when we entered the great hexagonal fore-court. But the Court of the Altar, the place of sacrifice corresponding to the Holy Place in the Temple of Solomon, is stupendous indeed. What a place this must have been when countless millions gathered here to worship their gods of fire; Baal, the sun, Astarte, the moon, and all the shining host of heaven!

About us lie the prostrate forms of innumerable marble columns, pillars carved with incredible skill from the native stone of Lebanon, others probably transported from the distant quarries of Greece, and still others whose red granite faces proclaim their Egyptian origin. There are more stately pillars in Baalbek than inhabitants.

Alas, one can find nowhere, not even in the Roman Forum, such a scene of ruin and desolation! Every fallen column, every crumbling arch and mutilated pedestal still retains mute evidence of prestine glory. Every bit of broken stone has some fastidious carving or cunning workmanship.

Six great pillars dominate the landscape. As one approaches Baalbek they raise their stately heads far above the flat houses and surrounding trees. Their mutilated beauty testifies to the magnificence of the peristyle of the Temple of Jupiter. We crawled on hands and knees over the masses of debris to rest in

their shadow. This was the holiest place of one of the richest, costliest, largest and most artistic temples ever erected by mortal hands, anywhere, to any god.

The westerning sun hung low over the summits of Lebanon and touched the yellow stone with rare and tender light. Lengthening shadows kindly threw their mantles of obscurity over the scars of Moslem barbarity. Here and there bits of fretted stone remained undisturbed as Roman hands had placed them 1,700 years ago.

It was a place for meditation. A long and sympathetic silence, more eloquent than words, fell between my friend and me. It was I who spoke.

"I see it now. Baalbek was made by the hand of God, a place for worship. The magnificent fountain of pure, cool water that here bursts from the bosom of earth to bless a dry and thirsty land, the long, lateral valley of Coele-Syria draining to the north by the Orontes to Antioch and the sea, to the south by the Litani and the 'Entering in of Hamath' to the sea, the gigantic shoulders of barren Anti-Lebanon holding back the sweeping, yellow sands of Arabia, the green ridge of Lebanon, fertile to the top, the naked rock on Lebanon's summit like queer Arabic characters inscribed by a giant's hand—all would direct the hearts of men, even stolid, idolatrous men, to erect their altars here. Baalbek was the religious, as Damascus was the political centre of Syria. It was inevitable. And here Solomon raised a temple for one of his Baalite wives."

At the mention of Solomon the young Syrian frowned. "Don't say that. It is not true. No Jew ever worshipped here." At the word

"Jew" he spat on the ground. "I hate them—hate them—hate them," he cried in a very storm of passion. He stamped the ground and gesticulated violently.

I was astonished. "What have the Jews done to you? You are worse than Henry Ford."

"Not a thing, but in my blood the hatred of two hundred generations burns like fire."

"But they are your nearest neighbors and your kinsfolk by blood."

"Indeed you are mistaken, sir. The Syrians are Caananites, from Canaan, son of Ham, son of Noah. The Hebrews are of the blood of Shem. We have been fighting them since Joshua, since Abraham, and we usually whipped them. We fight with them still."

"Ah," I replied, "you claim kin with Hiram, king of Tyre, Ben-Hadad, king of Damascus, Hannibal, the near-conqueror of Rome."

"Yes, that is our blood. We have lived on these mountains since the grandson of Noah settled here. We are the oldest nation on earth—perhaps the only people who live in their original homes."

"I never saw a young man who could hate so intensely. I wonder if you can love with the same ardent, passionate, Southern blood that stirs to such wrath?"

A smile spread over his handsome face and swept the storm away. He was silent a little and then replied so softly I could hardly catch the words, "I can love as never man has loved. Love is stronger than death."

"You speak with authority; no doubt from experience."

After a long pause, he replied: "I love the dearest, sweetest, purest, noblest maid in this world. I would lie down and die for her."

I swear I could; I would. Oh, sir, you are a stranger. Did ever a young man in America have such trouble as I?"

"Why, of course. They all have trouble. That is a part of the love game. What's bothering you? Some wild, handsome, gallant, young Arab out of the desert yonder is after the dearest, sweetest, purest, noblest and so on? Keep up heart, my boy. I will guarantee you win her. I never met a young man of finer timber. She can do no better. Don't commit suicide yet."

"An Arab!" he echoed the word with the quintessence of contempt. "It is no Arab. It's my own father. He has betrothed me to a Jew"—he spat again—"because she is rich, awfully wealthy, and I am bound by Syrian custom and law."

"Aha! I have seen her, met the dearest, sweetest, purest, noblest and so forth." As I spoke I took a bit of lace from my pocket. He snatched it from me, kissed it passionately and then returned it. It was evident that this lad took himself seriously.

The shadows were rapidly deepening. We could hear the weird call of the camel-drivers floating up from the long, white roads below. We could see the inhabitants of the village drinking their coffee on distant housetops. Lebanon was robing his massive flanks in tints of deep purple. At last Khlal spoke. "What would an American boy do?"

"Do you want me to tell you exactly what I think an American boy would do?"

"Yes."

"He would borrow his father's automobile, without thinking to ask permission, pick up Alice, Amaryllis, Ellen or Anne, race over to

Beyrout with a couple of speed 'cops' taking his number and would send the old man this wire:

" 'Amaryllis and I married just now. Perfectly happy. Please forgive us. Am dead broke. Wire thousand quick. Your dutiful son, Jim.'

" 'What would his father do?'" in awed tones.

"Oh, his father would tear his hair, crush the yellow paper in his fists, fling it on the floor, stamp on it, beat the table until he broke a couple of cut glass vases, declare that Jim never was worth his salt, and never would be. He would announce his immediate intention to dismiss Jim from the office, and he would also change his will. Then he would slam the door behind him.

"Jim's mother would pick up the yellow paper, spread it on her lap, read it sixteen times and cry copiously over it."

"When Jim's father caught her at it, he would make some uncomplimentary remarks about Jim's relations on his mother's side. The lady would then tell Jim's father that he was a brute and that she always had regretted that she didn't marry her other suitor twenty-five years ago. He at least was a gentleman, even if poor. Then she would shed more tears.

"In about half an hour Jim's father would come in with a bit of paper in his hand. He would give it to Jim's mother, and kiss her and tell her she was right, he was a brute. She would fling her arms around his neck and tell him that he was the dearest old thing in the world, and that she wouldn't stand for anybody calling her husband a brute. Then she would go to the telephone and in ten minutes Jim would be worth a thousand dollars.

"That's what would happen in America."

We walked together through the cool shadows of twilight to the hotel. He parted from me, hat in hand, saying that he had enjoyed the day. The darkness fell between us, and I have seen him no more, and never expect to see Khlal again.

Three weeks later at Jerusalem a card was handed me from Baalbek. It read:

"Honorable Friend. I did like you say Americans do. We were married two days now. I told her it was heroic to take chance for love's sake. We are very happy. Khlal Haddad."

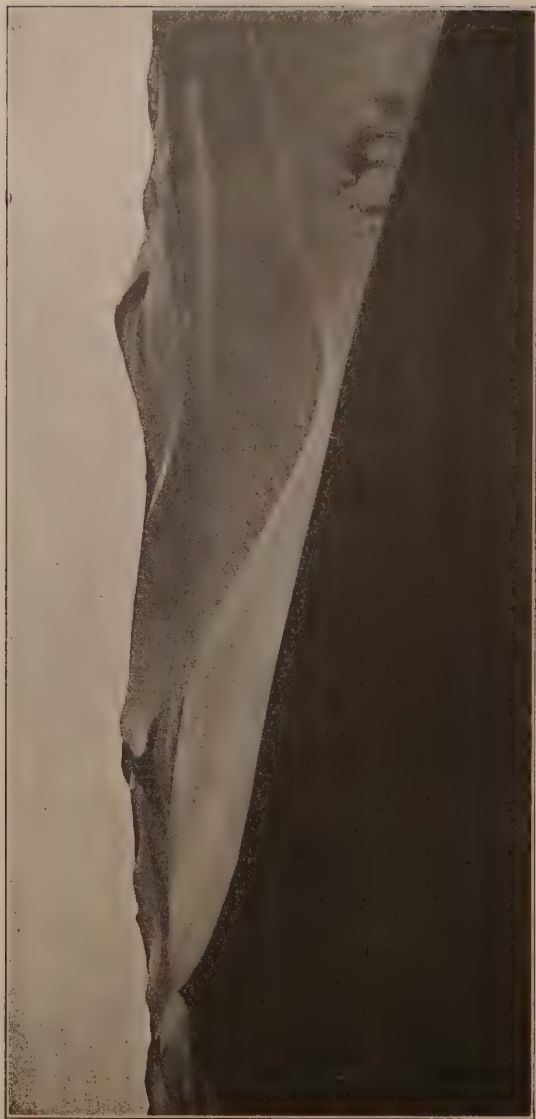
VI.

THE QUEEN OF THE DESERT.

The road to Damascus is about the only benefit that remains to Syria after eight hundred years of Turkish tyranny. It was forced upon the Moslems by the French, and was rebuilt under the dominating, domineering eye of German engineers.

From the rich, green slopes of Lebanon it descends into the long, lateral valley of Coele-Syria (Hollow Syria), as the Romans aptly named it. Then the road breasts the barren ridges of Anti-Lebanon, rising to more splendid heights at each ascending turn. Among the lofty, sultry peaks that glow like a furnace under the brilliant, Syrian sun it searches out the lowest pass and crosses it at an altitude of 4,500 feet. The desert air is parching dry. The mountains sweep to magnificent heights. Not a green thing is visible, for a heaven of Oriental blue bends above an earth of brass. Along the southern horizon the triple peaks of Hermon, wearing crowns of perpetual snow, stand forth against the sky.

The road is not lonely. Long caravans, as seen to distant view, move like black specks along the blistering, glimmering white road. They bring their burdens from the fastnesses of Arabia and Mesopotamia to the sea. The longest caravan we passed that day had fifty camels tied tandem. They moved in slow, steady, solemn, silent, swinging gait, making perhaps two miles an hour, traveling perhaps ten hours a day, resting at mid-day and night. Five or six men and boys with fifteen asses drove the caravan forward.



The tawny desert stretches afar, filling the background of every landscape.

The mountains slowly unfold before our rapid advance. The little rivulet, Abana, comes trickling along the roadside. Its gladsome waters are led off again and again into thirsty gardens, orchards, vineyards, yet ever fall back to the road and the floor of the narrow valley. The little river is fed by the exhaustless cisterns that God placed in the depths of the mountain mass.

The white houses of Damascus are set in an oasis of living green, like a costly pearl in an emerald frame. The tawny desert stretches afar, filling the background of every landscape.

Syria needs but one thing—water. And, paradoxically, there is plenty of water. For six months in the year the rainfall is torrential. And there is water ever underground. A few hydraulic engineers, a hundred well-located dams, ten thousand artesian wells, and Syria would become one of the richest lands on earth.

Damascus suffers from close inspection. She resembles a handsome woman whose gawdy raiment and flashing gems make a brave show, but whose silks are soiled and whose gems are glass and all her beauty slatternly. Within her mud walls multitudes surge to and fro, every conceivable shade and color of mankind. Wealthy Europeans and officers in gay uniforms jostle the almost naked fellaheen, and pick their way amid the ooze, filth and slime of streets that have not been cleansed since the days of Abraham. The shrewd mountain air and the dry breath of the desert combine to stay the plagues which must otherwise sweep away the unprotected people.

Some authorities call this city the oldest in the world; because "Eliezer of Damascus" was

Father Abraham's steward. But Melchizedek, "King of Salem," was an older man than Abraham, and, by that token, Jerusalem is older than Damascus. No doubt the sons of Canaan came down from the Lebanons and planted their gardens here while Noah was still alive.

Damascus is one of the most attractive cities in the world. She boasts no history like Jerusalem, no art like Florence, no architecture like Athens. "What can be the attraction that draws one irresistibly?" I asked my ignorant self time and again. At last I grasped it. "It is human nature." In Damascus more than in any place on earth man is frankly a human animal. Human nature stands forth naked, unabashed and unashamed. In the bazaars of Damascus everything is primitive, every one is natural. One dresses, talks, bargains, buys or sells as he pleases. There are no traditions, no ethical standards, no public opinion.

The bazaars present a scene unrivalled for variety and interest. The merchants of each guild gather into a quarter of their own. In the saddle market hundreds of men and boys work long hours at their leather, sitting cross-legged as they stitch, or selling straps to customers who seek their small booths. In the drapers' bazaar eager purchasers pass from tiny shop to tiny shop. The goldsmiths, joiners, sweets, silk, grocers, book-sellers, spicers, turners, carpet, and many other stalls invite the visitor to linger. The traveler who enjoys the beautiful, who appreciates the antique, or who candidly seeks sensations will find here his desires.

Near the starvling stalls of the book-sellers the ruins of an Arch of Triumph, which stood

in Roman days before the majestic temple of Jupiter, now serve as a gate to one of the largest, richest and most venerated mosques in Islam.

The temple was the pride and glory of Damascus. Emperor Theodosius (about 380 A. D.) re-dedicated the erstwhile temple as the Christian Church of "St. John the Baptist," because a casket beneath the pavement was reputed to hold the martyr's head.

With the coming of the Moslems they cast the Christians out, partially at first, wholly before long. Then the Sultan destroyed the church and built this mosque. He imported Greek architects and artists, collected antique columns from all parts of Syria, ruthlessly destroying ancient memorials for the plunder. The floors were laid with rare marbles and covered with magnificent carpets; the walls were ornamented with choice mosaics; the prayer niches were inlaid with silver, gold and precious stones. Six hundred lamps of solid gold once swung from a ceiling of exquisitely carved cedar and sandal wood.

On an upper beam the Emperor Theodosius had inscribed a Greek text (Ps. 145:13): "Thy Kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." The words "O Christ" being an interpolation. Whether by accident or design that prophecy has never been erased, although the Moslems, most fanatical of men, have ever known that it is there.

The sheik who conducted us through the mosque wore a green turban. Only those who are related to Mohammed by blood are allowed to wear green. He was very proud and haughty; but I noticed that for all his lofty

airs he did not hesitate to haggle over the tip placed in his open and receptive palm. We asked to see the text, but he replied gruffly: "Door locked, key lost."

Much of the wealth of the mosque has disappeared, but the pilgrims' fountain remains, which is said to mark half the distance from Constantinople to Mecca. The head of John Baptist remains, if indeed the ancient relic is authentic. A young scholar was diligently reading the Koran, swaying back and forth, as their manner is, before the Baptist's shrine. A million dollars' worth of Oriental rugs cover the tessellated floor.

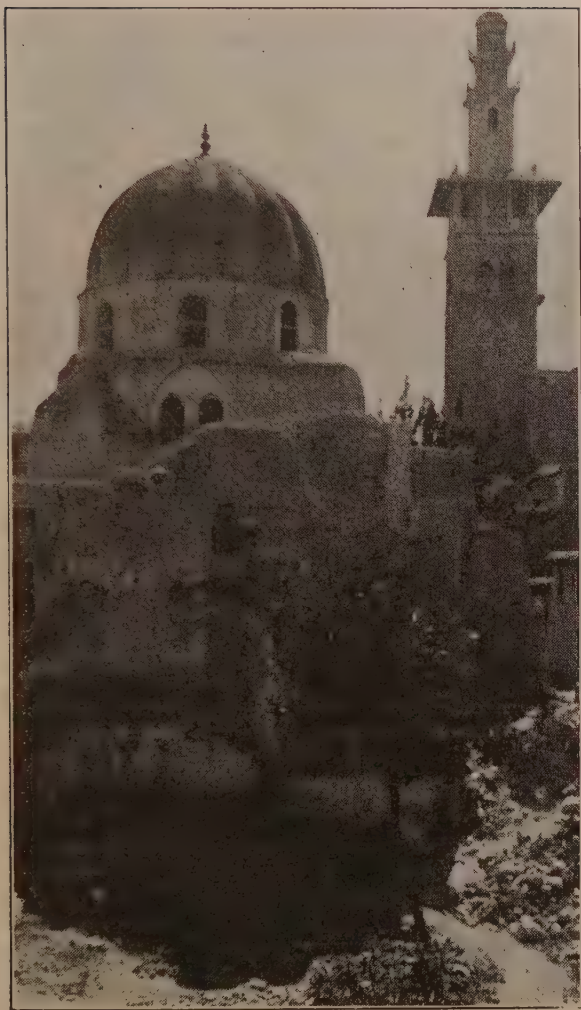
I turned to the haughty green turban, "We have for years been taking up collections in Christian churches all over America to feed the starving people of Syria. I have myself given a modest bit to that cause. The provision is used partly to feed your Moslem children who are taught to blaspheme the name of Christ and to curse infidel dogs. I suppose you still train them so?"

There was no reply, though he understood English well enough.

"I would like to ask if you sold any rug from any mosque to feed the starving Moslems of Syria? Did you strip any gold, silver or pearl from these magnificent walls? Did you use any of the treasure I see before me, or any that I do not see, but which I have no doubt you have hoarded in your vaults, to feed, clothe or help the war-stricken and dying?"

He shrugged his shoulders, and my questions have not as yet been answered.

VII.
THE SILKEN THREAD.



"The symmetrical dome of the Tomb of Saladin dominates the dirtiest and most dilapidated section of Damascus."

The tomb of Saladin may be considered a part of the Grand Mosque. For centuries no Christian foot was permitted to defile this hallowed spot. As a special courtesy between excellent, good friends the Sultan allowed William II. of Germany to visit Saladin's tomb (1898). The Kaiser, to show his appreciation, left a wreath of exquisitely carved bronze by the grave. When General Allenby came he quietly removed the wreath and it may now be seen in the British Museum.

But the last few years have wrought vast changes. The complete humiliation of all Moslem powers has had its effect. The humblest Christian may enter Saladin's beautiful mausoleum, provided only that he pay a small gratuity.

The symmetrical dome dominates the dirtiest and most dilapidated section of the city. One enters through a small garden of ancient oleander trees. Subdued, mellow light falling softly from rich stained-glass windows illumines the interior of the tomb. There are two stone slabs, hideous, as all Moslem tombs are hideous. One supposes that the wife, or favorite wife, of the great Sultan sleeps by his side. Not so. In Mohammedan lands women have no souls. They are animals, chattels, pieces of property, the playthings of men. The other tomb is that of Saladin's prime minister, his long-time, faithful and efficient friend.

In a crevice of the wall is Saladin's library. Evidently he was not literary, for one could hold the "library" under one arm. Islam holds no encouragement for education, culture or the higher ideals of mankind.

* * * * *

Oriental magicians are experts. They show

wondrous miracles in sleight of hand. They eat fire, chew glass, caress serpents, trample upon eggs, turn silver coins to tin and tin to silver, provided always that the visitor supplies the silver. The fakir readily supplies the tin.

"Put silken cord about head and I open gates of past to you, only ten piastres. But if American gentleman like visions I show, they give two times to help poor scholar like me, sometimes. I study wonderful years gone, and with silken thread I show you him."

I laughed skeptically. "Even a Christian Science, absent-treatment practitioner from Mrs. Eddy's Boston Church does not claim to open the gates of the past. My good scholar, I like the things that have passed and there are many, many persons who were and who are not that I would gladly see. If you and your silken thread can show me visions, I will gladly pay the double price."

"I do him," cried the scholar with Oriental enthusiasm. "Put silken cord about your head—so—I put other end about my head—so—you lie restful on soft pillow—so—and close eyes."

The scholar, as he liked to call himself, had small black eyes that suggested a snake.

I was not afraid of him, but was on my guard. And, besides, friends were near. I closed my eyes, and sure enough I saw Baalbek. There could be no mistake. The six columns rising over the treetops, the multitude of prostrate pillars, the mean village, the slopes of Lebanon with its cabalistic stones. I opened my eyes and the vision vanished.

"It was Baalbek," I declared.

"Certain," said the black-eyed scholar, "see all story I tell you. I do you no harm, but much good."

I closed my eyes again and I saw a little lad of eight playing in the streets of Baalbek. His father was there by his side, a commander in the Syrian army; his uncle, too—I wondered how I knew that these two men were the lad's father and uncle.

In less time than I can tell it the scene had shifted. It was Damascus. I had looked upon these minarets often in the last three days. I was even at that moment in the bazaars of the city that I saw.

"Damascus," I cried, and opened my eyes.

"Right," said the serpent eyes, "but let me show rest of story. I glanced at a roll in his hand. He sat some ten feet away. The silken thread bobbed and sagged between us.

"You are a hypnotist," I said. "Go ahead if you think your will stronger than mine."

"I am hypnotist, but I not hypnotize you. I tell good subjects—soon as I see him. It is no hypnotize. You are not good subject. I tell you story. I open gates of gone years to you. Silken thread make you see him like telegraph make words. Know it"

"Tell your story—open your gates—go ahead." I leaned back and closed my eyes again.

My friends said that while I lay there he read his scroll. His lips moved as his eyes traveled from right to right. He never raised his eyes.

Again I saw the lad, the same lad as I knew without the telling, grown now to young manhood. He was the beau of the town. His attire was elegant, his jewels flashed in the sun, and he drank the joys of Damascus—Damascus in its golden prime.

I judged the young man to be about twenty-

six when he turned from his life of dissipation and luxurious ease, donned the uniform of the cavalry and marched from the city, his uncle leading the host. I wondered vaguely how I knew the stern commander was his uncle. I wondered how I knew that he was marching and fighting in Egypt. It was Cairo.

Then his uncle died and the gallant young rider stepped quietly into his place. He was general now, building the walls of Cairo and the forts along the Nile. I looked again and the general had placed the calif of Cairo aside as gently as a mother picks up a fretful child and puts him to bed. There was neither riot nor disturbance in Cairo nor in all Egypt that lay before me, a green fan stretched on the tawny sands of the desert. Our hero is calif now.

I opened my eyes and Egypt and the story were gone.

"What is this you are showing? Who is this child, man, general, calif?" I asked.

"Ah," he replied with a touch of irritation, "why break story? You say you like gates open of past years. See all I show."

I closed my eyes again. The scene shifted to Damascus. The old Sultan lay dead. A weak, boyish-looking man smiled under the crown. Out of the dust, as of a vast army tramping, came the calif from Cairo. He bowed before the weak, young Sultan. He, too, was young, but no one would call him weak. He set the Sultan aside as quietly as he had set aside the calif of Cairo. The mountains of Syria, the deserts of Arabia, and the delta of Egypt hailed the young man as Emperor of the East.

Upon his throne the great Sultan was not

happy. He raised a finger of wrath and revenge. He shook it and I saw the mirage of Jerusalem. I wondered how I knew it was Jerusalem. The crusading armies were standing at guard upon the crenelated walls, pilgrims came and went by thousands, bearing their staves and their palms.

"Jerusalem," I murmured, but did not open my eyes, for the Sultan came with a great host marching and a battle was joined near the Sea of Galilee. The Christian warriors fell before his mace like ripened wheat. He entered the City of David and every cross disappeared and the crescent everywhere appeared. The crusading hosts melted away as I have seen the snow melt on the meadows of Virginia when the sun shines clear and warm upon a late spring morning.

Only on the plains before Acre in Western Galilee were the Christians left. The town was held by Saracens, although its strong walls were built by the crusaders. The European host fought as much among themselves as among the enemy. High on the hills the great Sultan besieged the besiegers. It was a most unique struggle, and evidently there could be but one conclusion.

"It's all over for the Christians," I murmured. And then a giant came over seas. I knew him on the instant. Had I not seen him in marble and bronze at London, York and Rouen? Those long arms, gigantic limbs, reddish-yellow locks, that feverish, impetuous, imperial manner, that English mace and especially the Norman battle axe. He whipped the factious Christians into line, and he fought the Saracens with a very lust of butchery and frenzy of joy. Had I not recognized him, the lions on his coat-of-mail would have identified

this cruel, kindly, savage, civilized, rude, cultured, ignorant, learned, contradictory king—Richard of the Lion Heart.

It was a bitter duel two antagonists each worthy of the other.

When Richard lay parched by Asiatic fever, the courtly Sultan sent him snow from Mount Hermon and luscious fruits from Damascus.

When Richard's horse was killed under him in battle behind Jaffa the Sultan sent his finest steed with the message that the King of England must not fight on foot.

The scene shifts again to Damascus. King Richard is gone, peace has come, and all the land has rest. The Emperor has reached the zenith of glory, and he is a young man still.

He placed his ambitious foot upon the top rung of the ladder of fame and power when an angel smote him, and he fell.

They bore him with all the signs of exaggerated Oriental grief to a magnificent tomb by the grand mosque in a tiny garden of oleanders, and laid him where soft light filters from stained glass windows far aloft.

"Saladin!" I cried, and started up. "You have shown me the life of Saladin, noblest of all Moslems, mightiest of Kurds."

"I open gates of glorious years. You like him?"

"Yes, like Richard my king, I like Saladin. Tell me," I insisted, as I removed the silken thread, "how you do the trick?"

"I charge only ten piastres—some American gentlemen like so much they pay twenty piastres."

"Here is a twenty-piastre note and here is a fifty piastre note. Take the twenty for the show, take the fifty and tell me how you did it."

"I take twenty—him is enough."

VIII.
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. PAUL.



The French have built a handsome boulevard through part of the city, following the Roman example, and not far distant from the "Street called Straight." A glimpse of it and the parkway, trees and flowers that ornament it is here obtained.

Damascus is dear to every Christian heart primarily because of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. The road that leads from Damascus to the southern countries has not changed in location, nor can it change. It skirts the eastern highlands which crown the height of land with the vast Arabian desert to the left, and the deep gorge of Jordan to the right (west). The road is ordinarily called the Pilgrim Highway, for it leads to Mecca, and uncounted millions of weary Moslem feet have

trod its dusty reaches, their stolid faces to the south, their souls filled with a glorious ecstasy of anticipation. By its sinuous length they return, betimes, the ambition of a lifetime achieved, and heaven assured; for have they not said a prayer to Allah in Mecca?

When Saul of Tarsus left Jerusalem with letters to the powerful hierarchy at Damascus he traveled northward from the Damascus Gate, over the mountains of Ephraim and down the Valley of Esdraelon. He had now the choice of two routes. He may have gone by way of the waters of Merom and along the flanks of Hermon, but it is more probable that he crossed the Jordan south of the Sea of Galilee and climbed the eastern highlands to the Pilgrim Road. It was the popular route in Roman days, and it is approximately the route of the present railway from Haifa to Damascus.

From Jerusalem to Damascus is 130 miles. Caravans make it in six days, though one may shortern the time, especially if he be not encumbered with baggage.

The last day of the journey is most tedious. Every step from the Sea of Galilee is a climb. The parched and withered wastes of the deserts become ever more assertive. The brilliant, blinding heat grows ever more trying. It is not so much the fierce rays of the sun that beat down, as the stifling, dusty refraction that rises from the earth and stifles, blinds and chokes one, as it were, by indirection.

The narrative does not localize the miracle, but scholars have tacitly agreed that it was at or near the summit of the last hill before the Pilgrim Road descends to the oasis city. Here the traveler from the south gets the first

view of Damascus. Here "at mid-day" the caravan would likely stop to rest, covering the last six miles, down grade, in the early evening. Here the city is seen indistinctly in the dim and dusty distance, a paradise of white in an oasis of blurred green. Mohammed when he came to this hill, we are told, refused to enter Damascus. He could enter paradise only once. So he jumped over the city to the barren ridges of Anti-Lebanon beyond. Sufficient notice has never been taken of this feat. I would like to nominate Mohammed for the world's record in the long jump. Any gentleman, even an Arab gentleman, who could spring ten miles from mountain to mountain, is entitled to some recognition as a gymnast. The universities should acclaim him a champion athlete.

Upon this height the future apostle was stricken to the earth by the Shekinah, the same celestial glory that had so frequently in Old Testament days brought the Baalites and other heathen to consternation. Now it was the intellectual young Hebrew who was smitten.

They led him by hand, perhaps on foot, to the city. It was a pathetic entry. He left Jerusalem with all the pride of a conqueror; he entered Damascus as humble as a slave.

The Romans, as usual, had driven a magnificent avenue through the sinuous lanes of Damascus. The great boulevard bisected the city, heading as straight as an arrow from east to west. It was ornamented by many fine columns and statues, a few fragments of which may still be identified. It was shaded by double, or perhaps quadruple, lines of palms and other beautiful trees. Upon this Syrian Champs Elysees fine government buildings

were erected and the homes of the richest men. Of course, the Moslems have no appreciation of such beauty. When they got control filthy huts and squalid tenements were built along the fine, straight avenue—and today its once-wide and lovely right-of-way is filled with narrow lanes, filthy huts, tenements and bazaars.

To the home of Judas on the north side of the Straight Street, so near the eastern gate that one might almost cast a stone upon it, they led the blinded, humbled persecutor. It is an incidental commentary upon the wealth, aristocracy and social standing of Judas, Saul's Syrian, Hebrew relative, or friend.

Judas made his guest comfortable in a room not large, but quiet and cool. There he fought his battle—a three-day conflict of soul. There he knelt at his Gethsemane, and there the Galilean conquered.

To that house we came. And when we entered, it was by the roof! The level of all cities rises; especially such cities as are the victims of wars, sieges and constant destruction and reconstruction. Damascus has been spared much of the sensational history of Jerusalem. She has managed to escape destruction such as has befallen so many of her rivals; but, even so, after the lapse of twenty centuries the straight street, now rather crooked, passes along the roofs of the houses built upon it in earlier days.

From the roof we descended into the house and room that was once the voluntary prison of Saul, and the place in which he remained until he was baptized by Ananias and came forth healed, physically and spiritually.

The room is not large, perhaps 15x20 feet.

It is not rectangular, but resembles a room made of two small rooms thrown together. It is now a Roman Catholic chapel, with altar, baptismal font, candles and many holy pictures. There are no images. In the East there is an intense popular prejudice against religious statuary. Rome is nothing if not tactful.

Whether this be really the house of Judas no man is wise enough now to say. I have my doubts. Still the tradition is ancient, reasonable, and if this is not the home no doubt the baptism of St. Paul took place in one near and like it.

The walls of Damascus are a travesty upon architecture and military science. They seem to be built of mud, and reversing the miracle of the walls of Jericho, it is a miracle that the walls of Damascus stand! It is even more wonderful that they support, here and there, little mud cabins upon them, in which they say people live. One of these high-perched cabins on a fragment of the mud wall is gravely pointed out to all visitors as the house and window out of which St. Paul was rescued by being lowered in a basket. That this site is impossible need hardly be said.

IX.

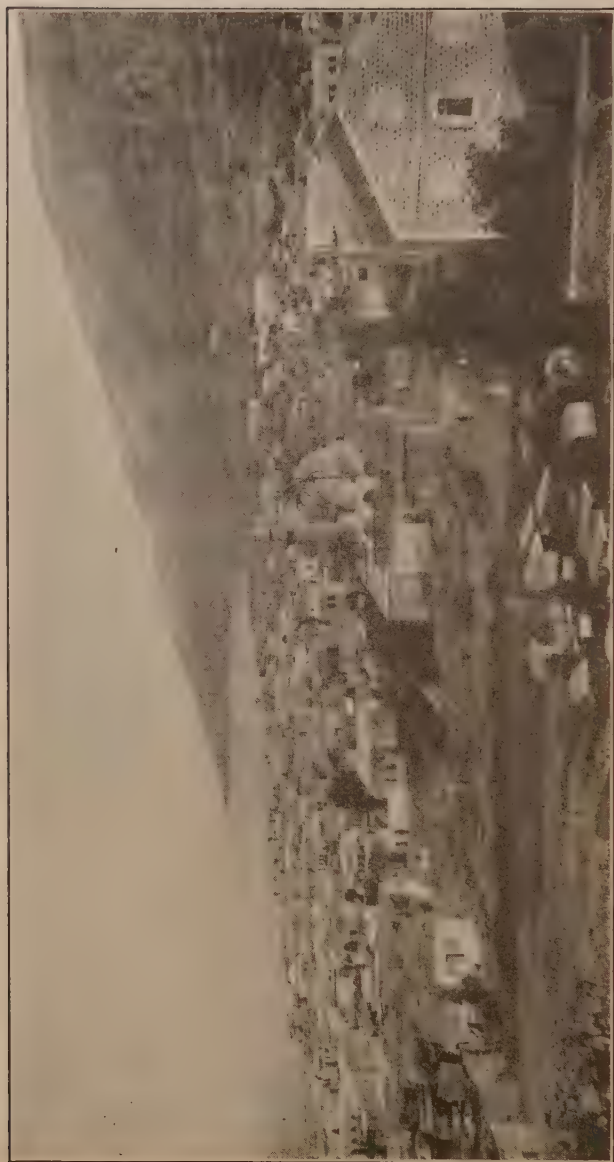
THE GALILEAN SHORE.

Damascus and Jerusalem are rival queens, ancient, influential and historic. Each is seated upon her lofty, Oriental throne. The oasis of Damascus, 2,300 feet above the sea, is as high as Asheville, N. C. Were it not that the deserts of yellow sand are forever exhaling upon her their feverish breath, her climate would not be different from that of our familiar "Land of the Sky." Lebanon air is dry, very dry, and the Syrian sun is hot, very hot. But when the sun sinks behind the dull, red flanks of Anti-Lebanon and the purple shadows gather over desert, oasis and plain, there is an edge to the air, even of mid-summer, that suggests the cool summits of the mountains and reminds one that the frosty crown of Mt. Hermon is less than twenty miles away.

Jerusalem, on her rocky crag, is two hundred feet higher than Damascus. Though further south and west her climate is similar. The deep gorge of Jordan, called by the Arabs the "Ghor," intervenes sharply and diagonally.

As the sun was setting beyond the misty heights of the Horns of Hattin our little ferry crossed the southern end of the Sea of Galilee.

The hotel at Tiberias is excellent, the rooms comfortable and the travelers were exceedingly weary, yet we could not rest. I supposed that I was the only suffered from insomnia. It was the depression. We had descended more than 3,000 feet during the travels of the day, and were now 700 feet below the ocean.



Tiberias Nestling Close to the Sea of Galilee.

In the small hours of morning I crept forth upon the housetop. The moon was old. Its gibbous crescent lay over the uplands of Galilee and flooded the landscape with a wierd, eerie light that trembled over mountain, plain and the dark waters below. I thought of that dim morning when Jesus walked these beaches in the twilight that precedes the dawn. He called to the toiling but disappointed disciples who fished vainly some three hundred feet from the shore, ordering them (expert fishermen, born and reared upon that sea) to change their nets from the left to the right side of the boat. How did He know which side they fished upon? How could the difference of a few feet, perhaps six feet, affect the catch? And who was He anyhow?

Perhaps from sheer disgust they raised the nets and lowered them again—and now the catch was so great that they could hardly handle them; 153 large fish were gathered into the meshes. I wondered as I watched the play of the ghostly light upon the water as black as sable, and shining here and there like highly polished ebony, what that miracle was really meant to teach, and whether any scholar has solved its meaning.

In the surprisingly miraculous catch John recognized the Master, and whispered the secret to Peter, who threw his coat about him and fell into the sea. They wear long gowns of pongee silk of such fine quality that they will not wear out. Perhaps that was the kind of raiment Peter used—old silk, soiled and stained, fit only for such rough work.

They breakfasted with Him on the sandy beach, eating the fish and bread prepared as the light of a new day broke over them. None

durst ask Him His identity. All knew Him for their risen Lord.

The time was April. The place within five miles of the spot on which I stood; perhaps nearer than I reckoned. The water, the land, the light was the same. The Saviour seems near and very tangible when one stands where His pierced feet have trod. It strengthens one's faith as it makes the Scriptures vivid in their reality.

The moon was gone. She sank in haste lest she be humiliated by the brilliant rising of her lord. The first glow of a new day glimmered along the eastern horizon so faintly that I deemed it the play of fancy. But the gray clouds took an unmistakable touch of pink, of mother of pearl, a suggestion of saffron, and the deep purple that God spreads so lavishly in Levantine lands.

As the light grew stronger the black waters took their deep hue of blue and over the sea the lofty, rocky palisades of Gaulonitis, and the eastern highlands gathered shape from misty uncertainty. I remembered how boldly they towered over the sea, how sternly they frowned upon the blue water, when the sinking sun was poised the evening before at the gates of the West.

The eastern highlands reminded me of the palisades of the Hudson. On the Galilee side the shore comes down gently. It opens here and there in fertile plains and rounded, terraced hills embroidered with the gray foliage of the olive, the light green of the oleander and almond, and the deep heavy green of the fig. Over all the land are brilliant flowers wherever a drop of water falls to father them.

On the eastern shore the rock-bound cliffs

offer no compromise. Their proud heads tower directly over the water and their naked slopes fall perpendicularly from heights as great above ocean level as the Sea of Galilee is below.

It is easy to understand why this eastern country was wild, uncouth and uncivilized. So it is today. Drove of camels and asses wander on the thirsty plains seeking a bit of succulence. Behind this dreary land of Bashan lie the still wilder wadies of Hauran, reputed the most inhospitable district of all the inhospitable lands of the once extended Turkish Empire. Over these trackless plains and sullen upland valleys the demoniac of Gadara was driven by the Legion of Devils that infested him.

It was now broad daylight. Those who had slept upon the flat roofs of the dirty little cabins of Tiberias were rising, fully clad, for Orientals do not remove their clothes before sleep. A few men were astir in the narrow streets. Camels unlocked their long, ungainly legs and arose to receive the burdens of another day. The dairy was passing from doorstep to doorstep, that the goats might be milked into the housewives' pails. There is no watering of milk and no tincture of formaldehyde in this milk supply. The shrill street calls floated up to me softened as they sifted through the fronds of graceful palms.

A light wisp of cloud, that had risen during the night from the fresh water of the lake, lay like a scarf before the brilliant eye of the sun. But he is an insistent lover, whose passionate ardor takes no refusal. He broke the virgin mists and poured his golden flood of light upon the water. Galilee was like the face

of Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai, the glory of heaven shining upon his face so that none could look upon his splendor with unblinded eye.

The shadow in which Tiberias lay seemed emblematic of her history. Jesus never came to the town, though much of His ministry was spent in the vicinity. And like the Master the Gospels completely ignore Tiberias.

When Jesus was about twenty years of age Herod Antipas, always remembered for the murder of John Baptist, established this new city by the little, inland sea, and called it Tiberias for his master at Rome. The pioneers disturbed an ancient cemetery of the Jews, introduced pagan abominations by wholesale, and set this alien colony in the midst of an intensely Hebrew district. The Jews resented it with characteristic vehemence and refused to live or even enter the town. Herod imported foreigners, beggars and adventurers to get a population.

After the destruction of Jerusalem, Tiberias became the capital of the country, and still later an important educational center. It is now the only town upon the Sea of Galilee.

The population is about 8,000, mostly miserable Jews, many recently imported from Russia and Central Europe.

Throughout Galilee, and especially near Tiberias, there are many agricultural colonies. The homes of these agricultural Jews are small and neat. All have roofs of bright red tile. Their lands are largely set to almond trees. This is a valuable crop, with a steady market. A grove of almonds will likely make a poor man rich in a few years. We dare say that these poverty-stricken Jewish immigrants now

eking out an existence will be in a single generation become financial giants in the land. A Jew and money are never long parted.

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X.

THE HORNS OF HATTIN.

The road that climbs the mountainside above Tiberias negotiates its grades by many a twist and turn. Though wisely located and well built it is nevertheless the despair of horse-flesh. Camels do not object to grades. They spurn such modern innovators as engineers and surveyors and mount the steeps as easily as they walk the cushioned sands of the desert.

When the road reaches the last round shoulder of the mountain it streaks off to the west. Here travelers always pause; to rest; to read yet once again this fragrant page of a deathless past, and to fix forever in memory the setting of these historic scenes. From this point of vantage the whole Sea of Galilee is visible, save only a bit of the western shore. To the north a dark green cluster marks the place where the cool water of the infant Jor-



Scene of the Sermon on the Mount on the
Sea of Galilee.

dan comes leaping from the perennial snows of Hermon. To the south a long, low sandbar chokes the exit of the water as though Galilee were loath to lose her limpid flood and would fain hold these blue waters forever in her bosom. She seems to know that the pure river will be stained and soiled by the clay of the valley. She has a presentiment of their dreary loss at last in the Sea of Death. Galilee is a mother who knows that her son must go forth, and yet who would fain hold him young, pure and beautiful within the narrow limits of the parental home.

The ruins of Capernaum lie along the north-western shore. The dismal site is tenanted now only by serpent and lizard. It is to recall the warning of Jesus to the city so fair and proud, "Wee unto thee, Capernaum." But they sinned away their day of grace, ages ago.

The road beside which Matthew-Levi sat to gather his tariff is excellently graded and paved. It, too, was prepared for the rushing of Turkish and German cannon in the day of battle, but it remains, let us hope permanently, as a highway of peace.

The shape of the Sea of Galilee suggests a heart. It is widest where the shores are not steep, and the waters form a pleasant, little bay at Magdala. From here the Vale of Gennesaret rises for many miles in steady but gentle undulations until it sweeps upward upon the horizon into the Horns of Hattin.

The Horns are almost 1,100 feet above the ocean, and 1,800 feet above the lakeshore at Magdala. Gennesaret is a plain tilted upon its western end.

The good Samaritan who was our guide courteously corrected my pronunciation. The

Horns are spelt Hattin, but are called "Hatteen." It is a double mountain, with a depression like the seat of a saddle between. To stand and gaze here is to catch a new meaning of the Sermon on the Mount. St. Luke, as always, gives the local color more exactly. Jesus retired from the crowded cities by the lake-shore to find a night of rest, peace and prayer in the pastures of Hattin. Only in some such sequestered place could he find grateful silence and surcease from the strident voices of an insistent mob. But the night was short, and they found Him with the coming of dawn, for He could not be hid. He chose his twelve helpers and descended with them from the steep pastures to meet the foot-sore, burdened throngs. It was a motley crowd, no doubt typical of "Galilee of the Gentiles." From the strict sectaries of Jerusalem to the Canaanites of Tyre and Sidon, all types and classes were represented. They called to Him, touched Him, thronged upon Him, demanding help and healing. And He healed them all. Then He sat before them in an amiptheatre made by the Hand of God at creation. Half a hundred such curving sites may be found along the rounded, sloping sides of Hattin.

The figures and illustrations for that most wonderful of discourses were and are plainly, obviously at hand. Ten miles to the north, straight away, shining white amidst the dull green and brown of valley and hill is Safed, then and now, an important town set on a hill of Naphtali. "A city set on a hill cannot be hid."

Jesus has much to say in the sermon about light. In the morning hours the whole, broad, sloping, open, fertile vale is flooded with light

in every nook and corner. In the early evening purple shadows gather and twilight falls rapidly along these slopes open to the east, but closed to the west. This sermon was spoken in the glorious sunshine of a cloudless morning and the gracious light shines still upon the sacred page.

Much, too, is said of riches. There lay open to view wheat yellowing to the harvests of May, gray olive orchards laden bountifully with fruit and oil, a thousand gardens growing food, the gift of the Good Father who sends His rain upon the just and the unjust. The billowing landscape with its detail of mountain and vale and sea, laughed with a wealth of farm and field, of city, shop, ship and shore. On every side there were good trees, and evil; the thorns and figs, brambles and grapes. Fish, eggs, stones and serpents were ready at hand for illustration.

In the blistering heat of a July morning the birds were swinging gracefully from mountain to lake, wheeling, and crying for very joy of strength and life as their wings cleaved the amber atmosphere.

The lilies of the field, to be sure, were gone, for the land is sorely baked and burned after the last rains are dried; but in the gladsome springtime they say Gennesaret is a carpet of multi-colored flowers spread over all the land, a riot of beauty and a prodigality of color. God flings the most exquisite splendor of things both great and small in every corner of earth, but nowhere is He more generous than on the plains of Galilee.

Next day there was a dispute about the amount of wheat in a bag, which was settled by the magistrate in Nazareth. Canvas was

spread in a narrow street between the bazaars. The officer filled the bushel with golden wheat, not a level measure as with us, but well shaken together, pressed down, heaped together, running over, until not one grain more would cling to the cone above the bushel. It was the custom in our Lord's day, and He described the magistrates as they measured the wheat as accurately as if He had been standing over them. That is the way the Father measures blessings to His children.

Just over the Horns of Hattin is a similar though less picturesque valley that drains to the south as Gennesaret falls away to the east. Here Saladin won a mighty victory which broke the power of the Crusaders, wrested Jerusalem from the Christians, roused all Europe to a frenzy of revenge and made mighty Saladin the master of the East. So near is this fatal battlefield that the shouts of the conquerors, the despair of the vanquished, the anguish and agony of the dying might have been heard from the place on the mountain slope where Jesus sat to proclaim the Gospel of Peace.

I could not bear to look upon that field of Moslem victory, once soaked with Christian blood. It set back the progress of these lands eight centuries and more. Again I recalled the fishermen vainly letting down their nets on the left side of the boat and toiling through the dark hours of night and the misty light that precedes the dawn. There is another crusade today. It also seeks to carry Jesus back to the lands that knew Him, rejected Him, accepted Him, and lost Him. But the crusaders do not go with mace, battle-axe and drawn sword. The prowess of Peter the Hermit and Richard Coeur de Lion has given place to the

prayers of Carey, Livingstone, Morrison and their followers. These crusaders go with schools, hospitals, printing presses and above all with the opened Gospel.

The crusaders for all their splendid faith and agony of enthusiasm, even to desperation, caught nothing; but when the net is let down on the right side it will enclose a multitude of fish that will tax the resources of the net to the uttermost. The prophecy is fulfilled before us. The church will not fail, for all her strength be sorely taxed. They drew the net at last safely to shore, and the fish were laid as silver trophies at the Saviour's feet.

XI.

THE ROLL OF THE GUNS.

It was wheat-threshing time. Patient oxen, asses and even camels are driven in endless circles around the floor, the straw thrown under their feet. It is astonishing how clean it is threshed, and a mystery how the various neighbors know what proportion of the grain belongs to them, for the wheat of the village is threshed together. Men and boys were busy and happy that July day, and entirely ready to pose for amateur photographers.

Under the altar of a beautiful Roman church they exhibit the foundations of the home of Nathanael, in which Jesus turned the water into wine. Nathanael was the bridegroom upon that occasion. Perhaps these traditions are correct, and perhaps this is the site of Jesus' first miracle. Cana is but a little village, set picturesquely in a covert of the low range of mountains that separate Galilee and the Plain of Esdraelon. The village clusters below a magnificent fountain whose clear, pure water bursts from the bosom of the hills. Cana has been a place of comparative quiet and has not witnessed such violent changes as Jerusalem and other cities. So the traditions that cling to these relics of a long-gone past are more apt to be accurate. We held flickering candles high and followed the black-robed father down slippery steps. He showed a water-pot of stone; one of the very vessels in which the water was turned to wedding wine! If only they would not press our credulity too far their stories would receive more credence. But, for all that,

I liked the church, its architecture and atmosphere, and I especially admired the inscription on a marble slab over the entrance, "Adorabimus in loco ubi steterunt pedes ejus." (We will worship in the place where His feet have stood.)



Roman Catholic church, Cana, over the reputed site of Nathanael's home. Moncera's home is to the immediate right of the beautiful church.

A little further down the street is the Greek church. We did not like it, nor its father, nor the two water-pots (the very pots, identical and so forth), nor the lack of cleanliness, nor the general ruin and delapidation. The Greek church is ubiquitous in holy places. If they do not possess an authentic relic they adopt one. The simple process of repetition through the years makes for confidence, you know. Who can tell that these claims are not valid? Who, indeed!

Moncera lives in a little, stone cabin so near the Latin church that one may call her Na-

thanael's closest neighbor. Her grandfather was the first and for years the only Evangelical Christian in Cana, and his family are still the only Protestants among the natives. A glance into their open, honest faces is fine testimony to the power of the Gospel. Their home was very small and in poor repair, but scrupulously clean.

In the fateful summer of 1914 Rev. J. M. Rowland, a Methodist pastor of Richmond, visited the churches of Cana. A handsome Bible, with his name and address stamped upon it in gold letters, was stolen from the hack at the village fountain.

It was Moncera's duty, as since the days of Rebecca in the East, to bring water from the fountain. One evening a Moslem accosted Moncera, then a little girl of twelve.

"You can read. What book is this?"

"It is an English book," she replied. At a glance she saw it was a handsome Bible.

"I'll sell you the book for fifty piastres (\$2.00); you can read it, I cannot."

"Oh, I have not so much money," she replied, "but I would like to buy the book. If you will sell for twelve piastres (48 cents) I'll try to get that." They made a bargain, and Moncera secured the Bible.

The same summer Turkey entered the war and Moncera's father was drafted, but for fifty pounds Egyptian (\$200) he secured exemption for one year. It was a heavy burden for a very poor man with a large family of small children. But he labored day and night against starvation and the next call. It came the second year. By exhausting every possible asset he raised another fifty pounds. But in

1916 they forced him into service. They knew him for a Protestant, a member of the Church of England, a Palestinian who confessedly escaped the army as long as possible, so German efficiency and Turkish brutality combined to crush the life out of him. They pushed him into places of drudgery, danger and death. He refused to die, but his health is sadly broken. Today, a man of fifty, he is as feeble as a man of eighty.

After their father's departure every squad that passed through Cana plundered the humble home of Moncera. The neighbors escaped unwelcome visits by pointing the hungry soldiers to the home of the Protestant Christian. Time and again their little store of provisions was swept bare. The cry of hunger from little lips that could not suffer in silence was forever in the toiling mother's ear and on her heart.

Through the dreadful year of 1917 the days grew ever darker. The pinch of poverty grew ever more acute, and starvation stalked boldly through all the war and famine-stricken countryside. The military authorities grew harsher and their exactions daily more burdensome.

As the November days were drawing in the worst blow fell. A Turkish officer ordered the family to prepare for deportation. The girls would be taken to Constantinople, the mother and little boys would be sent to Syria. "One week from today you depart."

Moncera told the story to her sympathetic guests in her little home. When she reached this episode her voice choked and tears streamed down her cheeks.

"It seemed as though our hearts would break. We cried by day, and prayed by night.

I did not see how Jesus could forsake us! My grandfather trusted Him, my father trusted Him, and now the burden was greater than we could bear. My sister and I asked God to deliver us from this shame and sorrow or else to strike us dead. How gladly would we have died!

"The week dragged its weary length of unutterable misery. It was, oh! so long in agony, and, oh! so short, when we thought of the dreadful deportation. The last night fell. Sister and I went to the housetop, for the December days were still warm. We clasped our Testaments to our bosoms and we prayed as never before, and cried until we thought our hearts would break for very sorrow. We could not bear to think of tomorrow and the shame and agony to follow.

"The night was clear and calm, not a cloud was in the sky, but we heard a peel of thunder that rolled ever so faintly over the hills toward Nazareth. And then another and another. We thought it must be a rising storm. As the weary hours passed the thunder grew ever louder and rolled longer. Sister cried, 'It's a battle in Esdraleon.' And she was right, for by midnight we could see the flash of fire reflected over the mountain summits. As the cannonade rolled nearer the flashes became continuous until the sky was aglow with frightful red like the world aflame. We did not, could not guess what it meant; but we watched, and hoped, wept and prayed.

"About 10 o'clock next morning the soldiers came to Cana as they had never come before. Some marched along the road from Nazareth, in perfect order; thousands upon

thousands swarmed over the hills, every man running for his life. Some rode camels and asses and some drove dories and carts. No one noticed us now, though a few paused long enough to beg for food. And all that long, eventful day the roll of the guns came floating unceasingly over the hills.

"It was General Allenby! God heard our prayer; God saved us just in time!" Again the tears rained down, tears of faith and gratitude that are precious in His sight.

After the return of peace Moncera wrote to the unknown man in distant America whose name was upon the Bible she had bought and kept six years. The letter found him in Lynchburg. He replied, thanking her for the Bible, and asking particulars of herself. She told her story. The desire of her life was to be a missionary to her people in Galilee, but she could not afford to attend school. Mr. Rowland at once raised the necessary fund and she will graduate next June from St. George's College at Jerusalem.

It is a strange providence. Because an Arab stole a book out of a hack at Cana seven years ago, a noble young woman, cultured, trained and on fire for Jesus Christ will go forth to teach and lead her people in Galilee. Only the Lord can bring "good out of infinite pain, sight out of blindness and purity out of a stain."

The congenial party who traveled together were invited to take lunch at Moncera's home. It was a delightful hour, the hospitable hosts, the delicate refreshments, the exhibit of beautiful lace made by the deft fingers of the women, Moncera's touching story, an earnest

prayer and a hymn. Four of the girls sang a sweet song about Galilee. As they sang I felt a tear rising—a tear of gratitude, of joy and sympathy. Behind the singers I could see the wedding scene in Cana, and Jesus as the guest of honor, and if tradition be correct the site upon which He turned the water to wedding wine was not a hundred feet from where I sat! I saw the faithful and loyal old grandfather, gone to his grave in peace before the days of terror came. I saw the Turks and understood their unmentionable plans to transport these happy Christian girls to the harems of Constantinople. I heard the roll of Allenby's guns, coming as God's own message and answering the prayers of ages, and of millions, and the prayers of these heart-broken girls who felt that Jesus could not and would not forsake them in the hour of direst need. I thanked God to the bottom of my heart that the Turkish terror is forever passed and that the triple cross of Great Britain flutters now over the homes and hearts of the land where His feet have trod.

XII. NAZARETH.

The village gossips are forever at the fountain of Cana, leaning over the cool coping, dipping their earthen jars into the clear water or loitering in the grateful shade of the overhanging trees. The historic highway makes a sharp turn at the fountain and begins its climb. The steep, barren and inhospitable hills brace their rugged shoulders against invaders and lock arms together to dispute the right of way.

It was a tedious climb in the glare of the blistering July sun. The teamsters, half asleep, held the reins in listless hands, and the horses crawled, never so slowly, over the irksome grades. "Time," said one wise observer, "has no value in the Orient." It was Kipling who wrote the epitaph of the fool who "tried to hustle the East."

But patience and perseverance are ever rewarded. We jogged to the very top, where the white road swings over the last shoulder of the mountain. In the glimmering distance, blinded by the brilliant light, the flat house-tops of Nazareth lie squat in the narrow valley below.

Touched, on the instant, as if by magic, teams and teamsters arouse to life and vigor. The drivers crack their whips, sound their horns and with loud shouts descend into the narrow, crowded streets at a furious pace. By miraculous margins naked children playing in the street are saved from trampling. We graze the hind legs of donkeys, camels and goats, lying asleep or chewing the cud contentedly in the highway. The drivers revel in this sensational arrival. Women rush to their case-

ments, peer out of the jalousies, their heads plated and plaited with gold and silver coins. Small boys in rags look on with intense admiration, and wonder if they will ever grow to be such great men as these fearless and furious drivers. Men neglect their Turkish pipes to see who are putting their teams into town at such frightful speed. Idle merchants leave their game of backgammon, or busy merchants their customers. Expostulations from the American victims bounced and bruised down the street are unheard, or, if heard, unheeded.

Of course, there is a town fountain. Every village or town is built in the vicinity of a spring. The harness jingled, axles groaned, brakes screamed and creaked, as the horses pulled up sharply at the Fountain of the Virgin. Many women and children and a few men are there, filling their jars with water, arriving or departing, hearing and telling the news of the day. It is a picture in the making, daily, for forty centuries. As this is the only fountain in Nazareth it is certain that Mary and Jesus resorted hither many, many times.

I recalled the beautiful scene Lew Wallace describes in *Ben Hur*. The young hero was marched in chains to this fountain in Nazareth on his way to the sea. "The prisoner sank down in the dust stupefied and apparently in the last stage of exhaustion. A youth who stood by unobserved laid down an axe he had been carrying, and took a pitcher of water from the well. He was so quiet that before the guard interfered he was stooping over the prisoner, offering him drink.

"Looking up the unfortunate youth saw a face he never forgot—the face of a boy about his own age, shaded by locks of yellowish,

bright chestnut hair; a face lighted by dark blue eyes, so soft, appealing, full of love and holy purpose. The young Jewish prisoner imbittered by his wrong, melted under the stranger's look and became as a child. He put his lips to the pitcher and drank long and deep. Not a word was said."

The youthful prisoner never forgot that face. Twenty years later he saw and recognized the face again. He was a Prisoner, nailed to a cross, between two thieves, on a hilltop, outside Jerusalem.

A full half-mile down the road is the church and monastery of the Annunciation. This site was identified as the home of Joseph by that energetic saint, the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great three centuries after Christ. There are still slight remains of St. Helena's church. When the Crusaders came they replaced it with a large, handsome structure. Many arches, pillars and other fragments of their work remain. The present church is about two hundred years old.

The priest provided long wax tapers and we descended fifteen marble steps to the chapel of Angels. A pillar marks the spot where Gabriel stood in the humble home of Joseph when he brought to the Virgin the message that Jesus was to be born of her. The Scripture passage is carved here: "Verbum caro hic factum est"—"Here the word was made flesh."

Two paces further a red, granite column is suspended from the ceiling. It remains from the Crusaders', perhaps from St. Helena's Church. It is directly over the spot on which Mary stood to receive the gracious message. Even the Moslems revered this column and

never profaned it. Many believe it is suspended by miraculous power, and has miraculous powers.

The home of Joseph, we are gravely told, stood here until 1291, when the angels picked it up and carried it through the air to Loretto in Italy where it may still be seen. This was to save it from Mohammedan desecration. Now that all fear of Mohammedan desecration has passed I wonder if the angels will kindly return the house to its original site?

One notices that such tales are told—all through the East and in Italy, too—with an apologetic air. Frequently the guide will add, "But I don't believe it myself." It is a pity that any Christians should feel justified in lying to strengthen faith!

But there is a very interesting building in Nazareth, well authenticated. It is the synagogue—now a Greek church. Its history is unbroken as far back as 700 A. D. Even at that remote date they claimed it was the home-synagogue of Jesus. The architecture is distinctly Hebraic. The location is in the midst of the town, now, and probably then. Here Jesus was invited to preach. Here He read the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah and claimed them as His own. Here they rushed upon Him and would have thrown Him over the bluff "on which the town is built." About a thousand feet south of the synagogue is a steep bluff, perhaps sixty feet or more in perpendicular. One flung headlong over it would find certain death at the bottom.

As intimated above, Nazareth knew we had arrived. Soon they gathered in and about the hotel, men with trinkets, post-cards and souvenirs to sell, and women with lace. The latter



A Street in Nazareth.

were the most persistent and insistent advertisers of their wares. They were bright and intelligent; I will not say they were rude. Orientals are always polite, and nearly always gentle. The women spoke English surprisingly well. Their lace was of the finest quality. One of them laid hold upon me.

"Ah, sir, help the poor widow, with four little children—hungry, little ones. Buy the lace she has made with her own, tired hands—by day and by candle-light, working far into the night—to feed the hungry, little ones—Christians all—like you, we are Christians, who delight to help one another. The lace is very

fine, sir. It will never wear out—and very cheap, sir, only 25 piastres for this pretty collar—one American dollar, just think of that—what is a little dollar to a rich gentleman like you? 'Take it, sir,' and here she thrust it into my unwilling hand, "a present from a poor widow, a souvenir from Nazareth where Jesus lived. He loved widows and little children, too. Take a present from these poor, tired hands."

Now I will confess it was hard, even for a hardened wretch, such as I, to resist such eloquence, the more touching because the English was pathetically broken. The woman did look tired, and no doubt she told the truth—or at least part of the truth.

The Americans left Nazareth laden with lace. On the trans-Atlantic voyage, the journeys done, we had ample time to review and compare the lace gathered in Egypt, Syria, Italy, France and Flanders. The lace wrought by the patient, tired hands of the wild women of Nazareth was finer in texture; more neatly, closely and artistically woven than lace from any other land; even a mere man, stupid to a degree, could see that at half a glance.

XIII.

THE PLAIN OF ESDRAELON.

Nazareth is neatly tucked in a covert of the Galilean hills. From the obscurity of that despised mountain village Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem. And into that obscurity they gladly returned from Egypt with the infant Christ.

The blight of Moslem domination has lain heavily on these highlands for no less than twelve centuries. At last the curse of the crescent is lifted and, we dare say, each recurring year will bring again to Galilee and Palestine something of the happiness and prosperity that once smiled upon her.

God has placed in the soil the elements of exhaustless fertility. The limestone rocks, the unfailing supply of water from the heavens above and in the caverns of the earth beneath, and the golden glory of the life-giving sun, suggest the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and the Blue Grass regions of Kentucky.

The boy Jesus must often have climbed the hills that surround Nazareth. No doubt He spent many a happy hour upon them. The highest summit near the town attains 1,600 feet.

The road that leads into Nazareth pauses at the fountain and passes the Church of the Annunciation. It leaves the town by a valley so narrow that it might be called a ravine, or a gorge. It climbs a steep acclivity, turns sharply on the rocky ridges of the mountain side, and drops again to the level of the plain. It was at the highest point, where the whole glorious landscape lay before us bathed in the

tender light of early morning that George Jalluk gave the order to rest the teams, and pointed out to his interested wards the splendid panorama now spread before them.

George, the best of Oriental guides, is a citizen of Jerusalem, a Samaritan by blood, a devout member of the Church of England, a neighbor of the Bishop of Jerusalem, a patriotic Palestinian, a thorough Oriental, with his long, silk dress, his red fez and his stout walking stick. George has guided thousands across this beloved land for two generations, and he is not as young as once he was. He is an expert linguist, and speaks English, French and Arabic almost in the same breath.

He knows the land, not as a student, but as a native. Every part of it he and his fathers before him have covered hundreds of times. Happy is that man who travels the holy lands under the guiding stick of the good Samaritan, George Jalluk.

A less careful and conscientious guide would have hurried his teams over these hills to get the work done quickly. Who would know the difference? Who indeed! Not George. From this vantage point thrust like a long nose from the face of the Galilean hills the road stood straight away, seeking the dim passes of Mount Ephraim and the cities of the south. This road is the most historic highway on earth. Even the glories of the Appian Way sink into relative insignificance before the road from Esdraelon to Jerusalem! Consider the long procession whose feet have trod this dust with the passing of unnumbered centuries. To tell of it would be to write the history of the world from Abraham to Allenby.

We are standing 1,000 feet above the tides

of ocean. Esdraelon, as level as a Western prairie, lies 800 feet below us, an atlas done by the hand of God. This low depression lies across the backbone ridge of Palestine, like the seat of a saddle; like the frozen, waveless surface of a lake, not blue, but dull red-brown; like the bottom of a dish ringed around by haughty summits that forever frown upon the fertile plain.

The man who looks from these hills will not likely be haughty. There is nothing that humbles one and emphasizes his insignificance more than to stand uncovered in the presence of a long and mighty past.

Candidly, it is worth the time, trouble and expense of travel over continents and seas to stand thus at silent gaze over the plains of Galilee. Every slope and hillside, every fertile field and filthy village, every crumbling mound that rises now like a grass-grown wart to mark the half-forgotten site where once a proud city stood, every fountain, well, brook, every nook and corner of Esdraelon is redolent of a deathless past. Over these fields civilizations have passed and have ruled, and sunk into oblivion; Canaanites, Hittites, Hebrews, Assyrians, Greeks, Samaritans, Maccabees, Romans, Egyptians, Parthians, Syrians, Saracens, Crusaders, French, Turks and now British.

Far to the west the long range of Mount Carmel stands boldly forth against the sky. Its bluish gray bulk, and its uncompromising front reminded me of the Blue Ridge in Virginia and Carolina as seen from a distance. Carmel pushes its misty flanks westward until it sinks hopelessly into the waves of the Mediterranean.

Mount Carmel always suggests Elijah. Upon that lofty summit near the sea he fasted and prayed and bowed his head and waited until God sent the clouds out of the west to break the years of drought according to his prophecy to Ahab.

In the narrow gorge immediately below the purple-gray flanks of the mountain, where the Galilean hills approach as though they would join hands with Carmel and lock the valley from the plains by the seashore, four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal were slain after God had sent fire from heaven to confound the fire-worshippers and Baal, their sun-god.

Mount Carmel, too, was prominent in Crusading days, and under its shadow Richard the Lion-Hearted had his fill of fighting.

Mount Carmel sinks at the Pass of Megiddo and a road of supreme importance to commerce and war slips through the narrow defile. The Pass of Megiddo is a gate. Mount Carmel is its western post, Mount Ephraim its eastern. Beyond the gate the long, fertile Plain of Sharon parallels the seashore. The roads of all centuries and the railway today lead south to Jaffa, the Philistine plain and the Delta of the Nile.

It was up the Plain of Sharon, through the Pass of Megiddo and into the Plain of Esdraelon that the Philistines came and cut the kingdom of Saul in two. They defeated him on the rugged ridges of Mount Gilboa, where he and Prince Jonathan and his other sons made their last, brave, fatal, but futile stand.

This was the way Napoleon came and Allenby followed.

The Turks held the lofty hills from Hebron northward. Allenby slowly gathered the

coastal plain under the British flag. The Turks supposed he would strike for Jerusalem. It would have been a long and bloody road, for a mountain country is always difficult to conquer and easy to defend. Allenby's strategy suggests to Americans the genius of Stonewall Jackson. While the Turks were strengthening their hold in the mountain land Allenby pushed his cavalry through the Pass of Megiddo and poured his army upon the Plain of Esdraelon. It was a bold move, for had the Turks captured the pass of Megiddo Allenby would have been isolated in a hostile land; but when the news came to Jerusalem that the English had fallen upon their flanks and threatened communication with Damascus and Constantinople the Turks fled in dismay. An army half a million strong melted away.

Three magnificent mountains mark the eastern boundary of Esdraelon. They rise in solemn grandeur and look down upon the plain, like gigantic sentinels. Mount Gilboa (1,650 feet) stands to the south. It is really a detached peak of the ranges of Ephraim. Little Hermon stands in the center (1,700 feet), rising from the plain in splendid isolation. Mount Tabor (1,850 feet), loftiest of the triple peaks, is thrust out somewhat from the Galilean hills, of which it is a part.

Between Gilboa and Little Hermon the Valley of Jezreel falls sharply to the Jordan. At the entrance to the valley the miserable village of Jezreel sits in mouldering ruins, dreaming of the brilliant days long gone when she was the queen city of the East. Not far from Jezreel the Well of Harod recalls the glories of Gideon and his exploits with three hundred chosen men.

Little Hermon is unique among all the mountains of earth. Upon the southern slope is Shunem, where a mother received her son to life at the hands of Elisha. On Hermon's northern slope is Nain, where Jesus stopped the funeral procession and restored to the widowed mother her only son.

Not far from Nain, at Endor, King Saul heard his doom from the ghostly lips of Samuel before the battle of Gilboa. The memories of three women cling to the skirts of this mountain—the witch, the widow, the wife.

Between Little Hermon and Tabor the narrow valley of Bireh falls away to Jordan. It is as obscure as Jezreel is famous. Strange to say a road does not pass along it. It has never been frequented. Elijah probably hid in these wild fastnesses. Here Barak and Deborah gathered their armies to overcome Sisera.

As I gazed upon Esdraelon I recalled the words of a famous author (George Adam Smith): "A great expanse of loam, red and black, which in a more peaceful land would be one sea of waving wheat with island villages, but here is a free, wild prairie, upon which one or two hamlets have ventured from the cover of the hills and a timid and tardy cultivation is only now seeking to overtake the waste of coarse grass and thistly herbs that camels love. No water is visible. The Kishon flows in a muddy trench unseen. Here and there a clump of trees shows where a deep well is worked to keep a little orchard green; dark patches of reeds betray the beds of winter swamps. The roads have no limit to their breadth, but sprawl, as if one caravan could not follow for mud the path of another.

"But these details sink in a great expanse,

and the level is made almost absolute by the rise of hills on every side.

"What a plain it is! Upon which not only the greatest empires, races and faiths, east and west, have contended, but each has come to judgment here. As it is said, 'He gathered them together unto a place called in the Hebrew tongue Har Megeddon.'"



Threshing wheat in the Plain of Esdraelon.

XIV.

THE CROWN OF SAMARIA.

Geographically and historically Samaria lies a solid block, in the centre of the Holy Land. Above her to the south rises Judea, below her to the north spreads peaceful Galilee.

Judea is a mass of tangled mountains, thrusting their sharp peaks, like tusks, against the sky. The lofty plateaux grow thirstier and thirstier as one approaches Hebron and the burning deserts of Sinai. In these parched plains the tribe of Simeon was lost. The hungry Arabian desert, too, invades this mountain land and sweeps up the barren, naked slopes from the Dead Sea. Judea is a land secluded, silent, separated; a country stern, uncompromising and unapproachable. Judea, as the name implies, is the native home of the unchanging Jew, a race shut off, from a land shut off.

North of Samaria lies Galilee, a land of open valleys, and fertile vales, a land of cool, bubbling springs, of happy glades and gentle, terraced hills. He who comes to Galilee by land or sea receives a smile of welcome. The stern prophets of the South called her "Galilee of the Gentiles," because all nations lay at her threshold. Beyond the Sea of Galilee to the east is, and has always been, the great caravan road to Damascus, Palmyra, Babylon and the gorgeous East. From the very heart of Galilee the long, easy gradient of Coele-Syria extends indefinitely northward. To the west the navies of Tyre and Sidon touched the isles of the Greeks, traded with Italy, colonized Carthage and Spain, sailed through the Straits of

Gibraltar and even discerned the shores of Britain wrapped in a misty mantle of obscurity at the world's far end.

Between Judea and Galilee lies Samaria; and she partakes of the nature of each. To gaze upon her from seaside or riverside she, too, looks an impregnable mountain mass that the hardest only might attempt to negotiate. The Old Testament prophets called her "Mount Ephraim." But when one climbs her summits he finds her mountains shot through with lateral valleys, fat with the grape, almond, and olive, pleasant coves and rich, inviting plains. It is even so with our own Blue Ridge. It appears a solid wall from the plains below, but in the forested mass of mountains are open valleys, fertile farms and many prosperous villages.

Samaria is not so open as Galilee, nor so closed as Judea. She is not so fertile, so well watered, nor so hospitable as Galilee, nor so sterile, forbidding nor austere as Judea.

And as her geography is, so is her history, so her people, her influence and her destiny.

In the heart of Mount Ephraim a lovely valley opens from the Plain of Sharon, and climbs by gentle terraces toward the summit of the great ridge. Whether one measures from north to south, or from east to west, this valley lies midway across the Holy Land. And in its midst an oblong hill, completely detached from the surrounding mountain peaks, which look down upon it, rises precipitately from the floor of the valley. Isaiah calls it a crown, and it does look like a crown. When surrounded by walls and studded with towers it must have resembled the crown of a king set with gems.

The summit of the hill is comparatively level. It measures approximately one mile long and is half as wide. Of course such an acropolis would have no military strength to-day, but when men fought with bows and arrows, this steep and detached hill could be rendered well nigh impregnable. And such indeed it was in the days of its glory. For two centuries Samaria was much more important commercially and politically, than Jerusalem.

After the secession of the Northern tribes the new kingdom of Israel enjoyed the unique distinction of a revolution in almost every generation. Their kings were assassinated, killed in battle, or burned to death, their palaces falling about their corpses. Civil war was a common experience. In short Ephraim was as unstable as the typical South American republic—a “cake unturned.”

At last a general named Omri, a lesser, Hebrew Julius Caesar, got himself elected king, whipped all his rivals and reigned for twelve years in comparative peace. He left the sequestered mountain village of Tirzeh, which had previously been the Northern capital and upon this crown-shaped acropolis, rising in the midst of the central valley, opening seaward and looking toward the setting sun he laid out a new city in generous fashion and called it from Shemer (its former owner) Samaria. The influence of the Phoenicians and Greeks is undoubtedly seen in the selection of the site, and in the elegant and artistic taste he displayed in building this new city.

Omri was a real statesman. He turned his back upon Moab and the petty kingdoms of Arabia and lifted his eyes to the great sea, the

navies of Tyre, and the wealth of Sidon, Philistinia, Egypt, Europe and the new world rising beyond the waters. He cemented this policy by marrying the crown-prince, Ahab, to the daughter of the Sidonian king. The bride's name was Jezebel. For all her studied wickedness, and stubborn, blood-thirsty iniquity the Princess was a queen. And for all his unspeakable sin the crown-prince, like his father, had great ability and was a real statesman.

Ahab and Jezebel greatly enlarged and improved Samaria. David in his grandest days had lived in a palace of cedar, but Ahab and Jezebel built a palace of ivory!

The worship of the Sun as the source of life was made the state religion. Jehovah was completely dethroned, Baal was god. This was not such a radical change as appears. All government rests upon consent of the governed. The people of Ephraim and Galilee had always been open to Syrian influence. Tyre and Damascus were far wealthier and more civilized than Jerusalem and Hebron. Then, too, Baal worship was attractive to oriental peoples. The ritual was gorgeous, and some of the rites, especially those of Astarte, the moon goddess, appealed to the basest passions of men.

A great temple to Baal was erected upon the crown of the Acropolis, looking of course to the east, but the gates of the city looked west. So Athens looked west. The statue of Athena gazed ever wistfully from the acropolis of Athens toward the western sea.

God was not unmindful of this wholesale defection of the larger half of His chosen people. Out of the fastnesses of the eastern deserts came the greatest of the prophets in this crisis.

He was absolutely devoted to his God and nation, but humanly speaking, he labored in vain for despite his hereulean efforts the people sank even deeper into idolatry. The truth is they liked a religion that sanctified sin (like Mohammed in the same land at a later day); and they didn't like the Mosaic puritanism of the Ten Commandments.

On the brow of the acropolis, just below the crown, at the extreme western end a magnificent Roman gate was erected by Herod. As one stands amid the ruins the hillside falls away 330 feet to the floor of the upland valley. In the middle distance the gently terraced slopes slip down amid vineyards and orchards of figs and olives to the plain of Sharon and the distant sea. In fifteen miles the valley descends 1,455 feet.

The site of the ancient city is strewn with broken pillars, crumbling capitals, and mutilated stones. Busy Americans have been digging from the debris secrets hid for centuries from human eyes, and lost to human memory. The Roman ruins, with unmistakable traces of Moslem and Crusader chipping, rest upon Greek and Maccabean foundations. Still deeper coins, bits of pottery and fragments of the first fortifications built by Omar have been unearthed.

Herod built a magnificent avenue through the city, leading the way from the great western gate, one mile long, sixty feet wide, ornamented by columns and statues. Many of the columns were handsome monoliths, and all were sixteen feet in height. Here and there a sad and lonely column remains still, mutilated like a derelict, battered and bruised by the surging tempests of time.

Into the western gate and through the streets of the acropolis came Elijah seeking Ahab in his ivory palace, when like a thunderbolt, he delivered the message from God, predicting the frightful drought and suffering that followed.

From these walls and towers the distracted Israelites watched the swarming Syrians who filled the valley below. Ben-Hadad and thirty-two allied kings besieged the city, but were driven off by God's help, once and twice again.

On a platform just without this western gate Ahab and Jehosaphat sat upon two thrones. Here the lying prophets foretold victory, but one true prophet foretold the defeat and death that followed swiftly and certainly.

To this gate they drove the corpse of Ahab from the bloody battlefield, and they buried him in Samaria beside his father, Omri. When his servants washed the chariot at the fountain below the scavenger dogs lapped his blood as Elijah had foretold.

The gate of Samaria never saw a stranger sight than when Elisha came on foot, leading a host of blinded, war-like Syrians, whose vision returned when they had followed the prophet into the streets of the city!

Huddled against the gate four lepers starved, while Ben-Hadad, fierce and determined foe, for a third time besieged the strong city. Into the Syrian camp they crept to beg food or suffer death if death must be. To their unspeakable astonishment the camp was deserted! God had miraculously preserved Samaria yet once again.

But when Shalmanezar came with his huge Assyrian armies and sat down for three years here the hour of destiny struck. The crown

was broken, the gates thrown down, the walls breached, the city utterly destroyed, and the crown of Samaria became a death's skull, the habitation of jackalls.

Alexander the Great moved the poverty-stricken Samaritans to Shechem, where they remain, a hybrid race with their hybrid religion, the oldest and smallest sect in the world.

To Shechem Jesus came and preached the sweet sermon on the water of life to a Samaritan woman and later to all the countryside. He passed along the roads to Galilee, but He never set foot in the accursed Herodian city on the hill, as He never set foot in the accursed Herodian city of Tiberias by the lake. But Philip came and preached the Risen Lord. The Samaritans were the first nation to receive the Gospel message, and they turned to Jesus Christ in the first, great, national revival.



The Mountain Mass of Samaria.

XV.

HEROD AND MARIAMNE.

(In the preparation of this story the following authorities have been consulted. Primarily the works of Josephus. Also: *Jews Under Roman Rule*, W. D. Morrison; *Herod*, Stephen Phillips; *Hebrew Men and Times*, J. H. Allen; *History of Rome*, T. Mommsen; *History of the Jewish People*, E. Schurer; *Life of Christ*, Edersheim; *Historical Geography of Holy Land*, George Adam Smith; *History of the Jews*, H. H. Milman; *Dictionary of Bible*, William Smith; *History of Jesus*, T. Keim; *Century Dictionary* and *Encyclopedia Britannica*.)

In the immediate background of the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ lay the facts presented in this paper. The characters and events, the ambitions, battles, successes and failures, the terrific tragedies moved like ill-defined but ever-present shadows behind the generation to which our Lord belonged.

They lay not only in His mind, but in the minds of all the varied multitudes to whom He ministered. In mountain cabin, in crowded city bazaars, in the fields of Galilee, by the lake shore men and women told these tales of horror, repeating them over and over again. Every child was familiar with them, even more than the average American child or man is familiar with the facts of American history. We are a people surfeited with newspapers, fresh every hour from the reeking presses, magazines by the wagon load and books by the million—these add to the light of intelligence, but they dull the edge of memory.

Herod was as close in time to Jesus Christ as Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee are to this generation. He was as close as Grover Cleveland is to the young men of today, or as Theodore Roosevelt is to our little children.

But how much closer in space. Herod and Mariamne were wedded and the queen executed within thirty miles of Nazareth, the home of Joseph at the time of the tragedy. Herod was buried in his huge tomb a few miles across the fields from the cave in Bethlehem in which Jesus had been born. The very year that heard the angels sing their natal anthem saw the magnificent funeral procession with all the elegance and pomp of Oriental royalty, lay the body of Herod the Great in his tomb at the Herodium. I have no doubt that the very shepherds, men and boys, who saw the angels and heard their celestial chants, who climbed the sloping fields to Bethlehem and knelt before the Infant Saviour, saw the august procession pass through Bethlehem a few months later. The women bereft of their little boys, two years old and under, stood by the roadside, no doubt, to whirl their curses not loud, but deep, upon the royal corpse.

It is really astonishing that Jesus and the gospels do not make more direct reference to this black history. But then you know countless generations had been taught to hold their tongues. The king can do no wrong. Oh, pshaw, if he does, better not mention it. Keep your opinions to yourself. Such has always been the attitude of those who live under the threatening shadows of despotism.

Part I.

The story of Herod begins with none other than that colossal giant Julius Caesar! Herod was of the blood of Esau. The fierce and sullen savagery of the wildest desert tribes coursed like liquid fire through his veins. He was a super-monster of a race of brutal monsters, the scourge of the world.

Herod's father ingratiated himself into the favor of Julius Caesar, while Caesar was in Egypt, and was made procurator of Jerusalem. His second son, Herod, a man twenty-five years of age, was made governor of Galilee. It was forty-five years before the birth of Jesus that Herod received this office—and in Galilee. We may judge that one humble citizen of Galilee (named Joseph of Nazareth) was an infant or a child at this time. The entire political life of Herod with all its fluctuations between glory and shame, between fame and criminal dishonor, all the brilliant lights and shadows black as hell were contemporaneous with the life of Joseph and much of it with the life of Mary the Virgin Mother.

Galilee had been infested for years by robber bands. The young governor, with characteristic energy, laid heavy hands upon the culprits and executed them. Strange as it may seem the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem was fired at once with the fiercest indignation. The truth was that these Galilean Robin Hoods were popular with the nationalists, for they preyed largely on government property and had the sympathy of the people. The Sanhedrists demanded that the young governor be summoned to Jerusalem to answer to them for executing men without warrant.

Herod came as accused never came before. The haughty senate was astonished and dismayed. He walked into their midst attired like



View of the Valley from the western gate of the ruins of Samaria.

a king, attended by a fearless and devoted band of soldiers ready to do his bidding to the last bloody command. The Sanhedrists trembled at his presence. And they had reason; reason then, and more reason later, as we shall see.

Herod answered his accusers as a conqueror speaks to his abject subjects. He retired from the chamber and from the city without awaiting their verdict.

He gathered an army in Galilee and returned to Jerusalem to take vengeance on the Sanhedrin, but was dissuaded by his father. Meantime Julius Caesar had promoted Herod to the governorship of Coele-Syria, the long and fer-

tile valley that lies to the north of Galilee between the Lebanons.

Mighty Caesar fell. Cassius, one of his murderers, came to the East as ruler. Herod at once became the friend of Cassius and was retained in the office that the fallen Caesar had given him.

But, when the battle was joined at Philippi, Cassius fell and the world lay at the feet of Mark Anthony. With the most astonishing versatility Herod won Mark Anthony. He was an expert in the difficult art of winning the favor of the conqueror. As each wave of political revolution swept over the Roman world and as every other time-server was swept away by the bloody currents of revenge, from first to last, Herod rode each political wave and retained royal favor. Mark Anthony wanted gold. With costly presents, wrung from Syrians and Jews, Herod bought the favor of Anthony—even though Cleopatra hated him. Herod mounted on the bloody, slippery skulls of enemies and friends alike, step by step. He returned from Egypt as the friend of Anthony; the governor of Judea; master of those hated senators, who had once dared accuse him, and who sought his life for his execution of a few Galilean peasant-robbers.

But his stay in Jerusalem was short. A terrific storm broke out of the north. The wild Parthians, fiercest tribes of the Persians living near the Caspian Sea, uncompromising enemies of Rome, struck Syria and came south to Jerusalem, sweeping the disciplined armies of Rome before them as a gale sweeps the surf on the strand.

Herod gathered up his household and fled.

He left his family at Masada and escaped into Arabia. Masada was a strong fortress built upon a rock that towers like a miniature Gibraltar over the western shores of the Dead Sea. It is isolated on every side and can be approached in only two places "where winding paths, half goat-tracks and half-ladders" lead to the top.

Herod had a wife, Doris, and a son, Antipater. He took Marimne with him to whom he was betrothed. Leaving Arabia Herod made his way to Rome, asking help of Anthony and Augustus. He succeeded beyond his wildest expectations, for the Roman senate sent him back with the title "King of the Jews."

Saul and David had been kings of Israel. David's line had remained as kings of Judah. One hundred and one years before Jesus was born Aristobulos, grandson of Simon Maccabaeus, assumed the title "King of the Jews." It had remained with the noble family High Priest and King united through four reigns.

When the Roman senate acclaimed Herod "King of the Jews" it was the proudest moment, as it was the proudest title, of his life. It asserted that he and his children after him were to be the royal family, the successors of the heroic Maccabeans and the logical, royal succession of David and his line.

Herod was always exceedingly sensitive of his plebian birth and his savage Idumaeon blood. The title "King of the Jews" more than any other one honor salved the sorest spot.

This explains why as an old man, with one foot in the grave and the blood of his own children, deeply dying hands and heart, the

savage old monster was intensely, fanatically exercised, when wise men from the East came to Jerusalem saying that the stars in their courses signified the birth of a new "King of the Jews." Was the new-born King begotten of his blood, a Herodian? Was He born to some Maccabean prince who had somehow escaped the savage fury of Herod? Or, was He born of David's blood? The old, royal Davidic line had not given either the Maccabean nor Herodian claimants any trouble.

Herod was no student, and probably not familiar with the Scriptures. But he instantly laid hands upon those who were. They came into his presence and read the well-known prophecy of Micah that the "Everlasting Ruler" will be born in Bethlehem, a small suburb of Jerusalem, almost in sight of the city. The wily, old king, who had met Cassius, Anthony and Augustus, face to face, and been equal to every emergency, instantly recognized in Bethlehem the likelihood of the new "King of the Jews" coming of the ancient Davidic royal house, long neglected and protected by their poverty and obscurity.

"Go find the new-born King and bring me word again!"

But when the savants did not return the old monster added yet another score to the tally of his innumerable murderings by the massacre of the innocents of Bethlehem.

There was a deep and profound significance in Pilate's superscription, the full import of which Pilate himself could not have realized. And there was a keen edge of sarcasm that the Jews were quick to resent when over the

central cross the legend was raised, "This is the King of the Jews."

When Herod returned from Rome he found Galilee in revolt. It was quickly subdued, then Samaria. His enemies retired behind the fortifications of Jerusalem to fight it out.

Herod made his headquarters on the Crown-Acropolis of Samaria and there he married the Princess Mariamne, whom he loved passionately and for whom he had waited five years.

As a political marriage the union of Herod and Mariamne was a master-stroke. The Hebrew people poured the love and devotion of five generations upon the children of Old Mattathias who had raised the standard of revolt and resisted the political power of Syria and the blasphemy of the Greeks and other idolaters.

Mariamne was sixth in descent from the first of the Maccabees. Her father and mother were both grandchildren of King Alexander Jannaeus. Like the marriage of Henry VII of England, of the House of Lancaster, and Elizabeth of York which united England after the disastrous wars of the Roses, the union of Herod and Mariamne promised well.

But Herod's marriage was not only political. He was enamoured of his bride. He loved her with the passionate ardor of the Oriental. She was the one thing in life he loved and desired. Her beauty is celebrated in song, drama and sober history. She was as fair as Cleopatra and as pure as the virgin snows that crowned Mount Hermon.

But Mariamne had one fault, an excessive pride of birth. She did not hesitate to raise the wrath of Herod's mother and sister to a

white heat of fury that finally brought her to her doom. The Herodians were parvenus, meanly born, desert Idumaeans, newly rich and newly fortunate. For Herod she had no love. She submitted to his violent caresses as to a fate she would gladly have escaped. She bore him five children, two daughters and three sons, but to the last she despised the blood that coursed within their veins.

Ah, Mariamne, what an opportunity was yours! You are not the only woman who has had the chance to save a man—and what a man! For all his humble birth and blood, for all his bloody gore, Herod was a man and a king—the most influential man or king in all the East. Had your gentle, white hand led him you might have saved him, and in saving him you would have saved yourself, your sons and your nation. Such a chance as came to you comes but seldom. In fact, no woman in history had such a chance as had you. But you could not humble your pride. You did not learn to love the monster who adored you with every fibre of his being. You came and lived and died as cold as an ice floe on the polar seas!

Ah, Mariamne, for all your pride of birth and blood you too were a par-venue. Most of us are, if the thin red line be carried far enough back into the dim mists of past generations. There lived, when you were queen, a humble family in Nazareth, tucked in a covert of the hills, thirty miles from your palace on the acropolis, a poor carpenter named Joseph. Beside him and his, Mariamne, your aristocratic blood was nothing. Who was Mat-

tathias? The world does not remember him. But David the world will never forget.

And there was a promise made to David, you recall, O Queen Mariamne, that God should never lack a man in his royal line.

Part II.

Herod left Mariamne in the palace of Samaria and hastened to his loyal and successful armies now closing in upon Jerusalem. Behind the ramparts of the doomed city a Maccabean prince, an uncle of Queen Mariamne, held a forlorn hope. It was useless. Jerusalem fell before the united strength of Herod and Rome. The carnage within the narrow streets of Jerusalem was frightful. But, alas, Jerusalem was fast becoming a city of massacres. When the Romans withdrew they took Mariamne's uncle with them and by Herod's express wish he was executed. Forty-five of the richest nobles in Jerusalem were likewise executed. The new King of the Jews would rather be monarch in a land of death and desolation than to allow any possible rival to lift his head.

Queen Mariamne had a brother to whom she was peculiarly devoted. The lad was only seventeen years old, and with Mariamne represented the old royal-priestly line of the Maccabees. Possibly as a popular measure, for God knows the new king needed something to render him popular with his subjects; and, possibly, at the request of beautiful Mariamne Herod made the lad High Priest. Sometimes success succeeds too well. Jerusalem rang with joy. The little High Priest was the idol of the day. City and countryside vied one

with the other to do him homage. Within his veins flowed with the blood of all the heroic Maccabees, kings and priests for six generations! Herod's jealous brow darkened. What more could they desire than the kingdom for this son of kings? Mariamne and her mother were well pleased and grateful; but, for all that, not one spark of love was born in Mariamne's breast for her monster-husband.

The Queen's mother trembled at the thunder clouds of jealous wrathforgathering on Herod's brow. Cleopatra, the rapid Egyptian queen, held Mark Anthony in a mesh of love and lust. Cleopatra hated Herod, her near neighbor and constant rival. The Queen's mother knew that Herod's spies had her and the little High Priest under constant surveillance. She laid a sensational plan to escape to Cleopatra with her son. They were carried out of the city in coffins; but the King was shrewd; the coffins with their live occupants were arrested in their flight.

Shortly after the little High Priest was drowned, accidentally, as he bathed in the royal gardens of Jericho. That's what the King said, "A most unfortunate, deplorable accident." And that's what the sycophants of the court said, as they shook their heads, "Too bad, too bad, and he so young, fair and popular, quite the idol of the people, and the devoted brother of the beautiful Queen." But the scornful Queen knew better. And every Jewish peasant in every cabin of every village knew that the hand of Herod had drawn the little High Priest under the waters as certainly as if they had witnessed the frightful murder with their own eyes.

The Queen's mother denounced the mur-

derer of the High Priest to Cleopatra. The rapid lady of the Nile was delighted! She denounced Herod to Mark Anthony and Herod was summoned to Rome to answer before Anthony and Augustus for the infamous assassination.

He left the government to his Uncle Joseph. Joseph married Herod's sister Salome. Such incestuous marriages were frequent in the Herodian family. You will hear much of Salome. If Herod was black, Salome was blacker. Of all the wicked women in the world, none was worse than Salome. As Mariamne was Herod's good angel, Salome was the devil's efficient agent to drag her brother to the blackest depths of crime. Of course, Mariamne hated Salome. The contempt that curled upon her frail lips for Herod was accentuated, emphasized and embittered when Mariamne met Salome and Herod's brutal mother.

Salome's husband Joseph was vice-regent. He was weak, was Joseph, else Herod would never have trusted him. Herod ordered Joseph to execute Mariamne if he fell by shipwreck or by execution at Rome. So great was his passion for the Queen that he would not allow her to become the wife of another man, even though he himself was in hell.

Salome wrung that bit of information out of her weak husband. And, of course, she wanted Mariamne to know her probable fate.

Herod returned safely. The luck that had ever been his held still. He had won despite Cleopatra, and despite the Jews who also went to Rome to plead, "We will not have this man to rule over us." Herod returned stronger than he left; but he ceded to Cleopatra, as a

peace offering, Jericho and a part of the Philistine plain.

When the King met the Queen she was ready to upbraid him with his unspeakable cruelty. Herod was furious. Why had Joseph told Mariamne that secret! Salome whispered in Herod's ear that the Queen knew all Joseph knew. Joseph was her husband and their father's brother, but Joseph was faithful, the paramour of beautiful and trusted but faithless Queen Mariamne. In a tempest of jealousy, fury and rage Herod ordered the instant execution of Joseph. The old man fell without hearing the accusation that brought him to his doom. But Mariamne was spared.

The whole wide world was controlled by two men; Anthony held the East, Octavius (or, as we always remember him, Augustus) held the West. The whole world was too small.

There wasn't enough room for both. They met at Actium off the classic shores of Greece to fight it out. Cleopatra was with Anthony. When the battle was joined, she fled. Anthony flung over the fight and followed Cleopatra to his doom.

Herod was Anthony's friend; as he had been Cassius' friend before Cassius' fall; as he had been Julius Caesar's friend before Caesar's fall. The fickle fates put Herod always on the wrong side of the table.

When news came of Actium the Jews rejoiced. That will finish Herod. We will at last be free of this inhuman monster.

Had Herod been a lesser man he would have fled the country, or awaited his doom in Jerusalem. But it is characteristic of the man that he ordered out the royal galleys, and sailed to

meet Augustus on the historic island of Rhodes. He bowed before the young conqueror, reminded him of his fidelity to Mark Anthony, and begged to give to great Augustus the same allegiance that had once been Anthony's strength in Syria and the East. It was a magnificent stroke, and it won. The Jews were there, too, to congratulate Augustus, and cry again, "We will not have this man to rule over us."

All that he had given Cleopatra was returned, and the enlarged kingdom of Herod was now almost exactly the long, long gone kingdom of David in Israel's golden prime.

It was twenty-six years before the birth of Jesus.

When Herod left Jerusalem he appointed a faithful servant, Soemus, his deputy. He had his family (doubtless for prudential reasons) removed to the palace at Samaria. He gave Soemus the same cruel charge relative to the Queen. "If I die, she is to be executed." Again Salome guessed the fatal secret. Again she determined to get rid of the Queen if intrigue could do so. Salome called in Herod's mother to help.

Herod returned from Rhodes with great, grand news to tell. Of all his victories on battlefield or at council table this was his greatest, as the crisis had been most acute, and every chance was stacked against him. His one great desire was to tell Mariamne. Maybe at last she would come to love the king of David's kingdom, once again restored after a thousand weary years.

He pushed his horse at furious speed along the valley roads that led to Samaria. He flung himself on his couch and commanded that

Mariamne be brought to him at once. She came as cold and proud as a marble statue. She refused to rejoice at his success. She scorned at his affectionate caresses. She groaned at his ardent demonstrations of love, and positively refused all his demands. It was a tragic scene. The King was perplexed, then he grew angry, then jealous. She taunted him with his repeated command to kill her, if he fell at Rhodes. And she especially denounced him for the murders of her kindred, her brother, the little High Priest, her grandfather, the old king, and her uncle.

Herod had forgiven Mariamne much. He loved her to distraction. But like many a good general, and many an unwise woman, the Queen pushed her advantage too far. No doubt life held but slight attractions for her, living in a perpetual hell, and bound helplessly and hopelessly to such a bloody, brutal monster.

The King's fury now overleaped all bounds. as a river bursts its banks and devastates all the plains. He roared like a maniac. He raved like a madman. His intense passion made him ill, and his jealousy and fury turned his reason. King Herod was never mentally normal after this.

At the critical moment his mother and sister Salome gained access to him. They insisted that the Queen was faithless. They named the deputy, Soemus, as her new lover. They played upon his passion, his disappointment, his suspicions and his jealous rancor until the wild King ordered the instant execution of Soemus and the arrest and trial of the Queen.

At the trial Mariamne's own mother turned against her. The brave woman faced her accusers with scorn. The courage that came to

her with the blood of the heroic Maccabees was her possession. She did not hesitate, nor tremble. When they pronounced her guilty she did not turn color, but met the death that followed immediately as though death were a relief.

With the execution of his beautiful and beloved Queen, Herod's malady grew worse. His love and ardor returned upon him. Oh, for Mariamne, the only being that he ever loved, or could love. The most exaggerated paroxysms of grief seized upon him. Passionate longing for the touch of her hand tormented him. He walked the marble colonades, calling piteously, "Mariamne, Mariamne." He fell in fits upon the floor and writhed like a serpent, crying, and demanding that Mariamne come to comfort him. He had the servants call her, and listened as they went down the long arcades and through the royal gardens summoning the dead Queen into the presence of her royal husband.

Ah, Herod, you had the power to loose the silver cord, but can you "back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?" Can you "provoke the silent dust" or reach the "dull cold ear of death?"

The ancient Jews told the story again and again. They shook their bearded heads. It was God's judgment on the bloody tyrant. No doubt they were right. Conscience is a terrible master. With Mariamne the light of Herod's life was extinguished. He sunk deeper and ever deeper into the slough of sin, and the hopeless agony of demented grief.

In painful contrast to the misery of the King was the brilliant success of his government. Taxes were heavy, but times were good, money

plentiful, crops abundant, business brisk, justice was done after the Roman fashion.

Great roads were constructed and cities were built. On the seacoast under the steep ramparts of Mount Carmel, Herod built a Roman seaport and named it Caesarea—for Caesar, of course.

The ancient and oft-ruined acropolis of Samaria he rebuilt, almost wholly, also on the Roman model, with strong walls, lofty gates and towers, a magnificent boulevard and many elegant palaces and public buildings. The name was changed to Sebaste, Greek for Augustus. Caesarea and Sebaste, port and capital, Caesar Augustus.

Sixteen years before the birth of Christ Herod began to ornament Jerusalem. His one diversion was vast and grand buildings. It fell in with his personal tastes, with the glory of his reign, and with the religious prejudice of the Jews that he should rebuild the Temple; once so splendid, and now so shabby. For nine years they labored upon it. Neither time, wealth nor art was spared to make the Temple of Herod rival the Temple of Solomon. But such a vast, intricate and magnificent pile is never completed. Witness the cathedrals of Europe and our great American buildings. When Jesus began His ministry they said to Him, accurately, forty and six years is the temple in building.

At Jericho Herod built a magnificent palace, the slight remains of which still may be seen in the desert wastes. To the south of Bethlehem on one of the highest points in the land, he constructed the Herodium, one of the greatest tombs in the world. He shaped up a truncated

peak at vast labor and expense as his mausoleum.

Queen Mariamne left five children, two daughters and three sons. The boys were educated at Rome to be near great Caesar. One of them died there. It was generally understood on all hands that the sons of Mariamne were to succeed their father. The King had ten wives and many children. His palaces were fetid spots of corruption and intrigue. Plots and counter-plots flew ever thick in the air. Princes and princesses, court sycophants, women of the harem, eunuchs, politicians and all manner of schemers took a hand. But the chief plotter and the very Queen-of-Devils was the same Salome. The hatred that brought Mariamne to the block, she now transferred to Mariamne's two sons—the crown princes. It is a long, sad story. At last the old King gave the order and his two sons, by Mariamne, Alexander and Aristobulus, the last of the Maccabees, were strangled in the palace of Samaria—the palace that had seen the wedding of their mother—her final break with the King—her trial and assassination. The princes were laid in the Alexandrium as it is called—in the province of Samaria—two years before the birth of Jesus.

The younger of the princes left a daughter named Herodias—the granddaughter of Mariamne. She married two of her own half-uncles, Philip and Antipas. She and her daughter, Salome, who danced, were the murderers of John the Baptist.

Herod's oldest son was now recalled from exile. He was to succeed his father, for Herod was dying. But the heir apparent couldn't

wait. He was detected by Salome in plots to kill his dying father.

Just then Jesus Christ was born.

The wise men came from the East.

The innocent children of Bethlehem were murdered. Herod's oldest son was executed for his unnatural treason just five days before the old King died.

From Jericho they bore his body through Jerusalem to Bethlehem and to the Herodium that towers to this day over the Field of Watching and in plain sight of the cave in which the King of the Jews was born. And there he lies today—as I suppose—to await the Resurrection of the Just and Unjust.

When Herod rises from the Herodium, as come he must and will, the "King of the Jews" by Caesar's order and the Roman Senate's proclamation, will face in judgment the King of the Jews by God Almighty's order and the proclamation of angels.

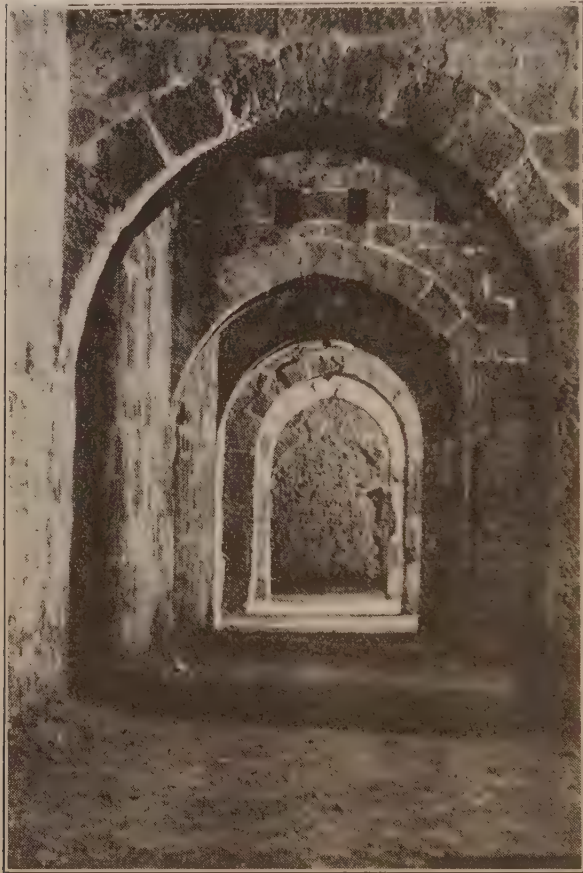
The "King of the Jews" searched for the Infant Christ, but did not find Him.

The "King of the Jews" will meet the Christ whom once he sought with murderous hand, when the judgment hour strikes.

XVI.

THE SHADOW OF GERIZIM.

In Scripture days Nablus was Shechem. The miserable huts of this crowded town are pressed within a narrow valley between Ebal and Gerizim. Evidences of Crusader occupation are everywhere present for Nablus was a



"Vaulted tunnels, called by courtesy streets, narrow, dark, forbidding and circuitous, climb along the rough spurs of Mt. Gerizim."

Crusader fortress in the heart of a hostile land. Vaulted tunnels, called by courtesy streets, narrow dark, forbidding and circuitous, climb along the rough spurs of Gerizim. The houses are of stone, the walls thick, permanent, massive, encrusted with the filth of centuries, alive with vermin, closed, for the more part, to the ardent, purifying light of the sun. These stolid habitations of Nablus defy the tooth of time. The mean bazaars, unattractive even by day, are closed at night with heavy timbers of oak and cedar, reinforced by hand-wrought iron hinges, braces and bars. They look like dungeon doors of some mediaeval German castle. The curses once hurled from the frowning heights of Mount Ebal, over against Shechem, linger still in this degenerate Moslem town.

Nablus is a Mohammedan stronghold. Some 25,000 ragged inhabitants live in layers of grimy tenements and trudge these steep, dark lanes. Less than a thousand of them are Christians, and less than 200 are connected with the Church of England. Moslems are professional iconoclasts. They live well to the tenets of their creed. It is a virtue to destroy all that can be destroyed; and, for the rest, take fanatical possession. The Emperor Justinian erected a temple in the midst of Shechem, and the Crusaders rebuilt it (1167). The front is fairly well preserved. Its rich tracery of carved stone is melancholy evidence of departed glory. It is now the chief Mosque of the town. Admission was denied us, but we peeped within the grimy windows and saw the unwashed worshippers sleeping on oriental rugs in their filthy clothes along the walls; as is the Mohammedan custom.

There is another mosque, "The Mosque of Heaven," on the reputed spot where Jacob received Joseph's coat of many colors, sadly torn and bloody, from the hands of his sons, after they sold the lad into Egyptian slavery. According to Genesis Jacob sent Joseph from Hebron to inquire of his brothers. It is not said that Jacob received the coat at Hebron although such was probably the case. It must be admitted, however, that this tradition is ancient, if not accurate.

Shechem has seen within her streets almost every character that enters the Scripture narrative, and the history of the East. It is a gate through which all pass as they journey in the Promised Land.

When Father Abraham came first into Canaan he rested under a giant oak east of Shechem. God appeared in a vision and promised this land to him and his children forever.

Abraham erected his first altar here. Indeed the history of Israel began, as it were, under the shadow of Ebal and Gerizim.

Following the example of his grandfather, Jacob made his first stop in this hostile land, (after his flight from irate Esau), under the same oak. He repaired the altar and worshipped here. Evidently the wealthy patriarch with his numerous tents, herds of cattle, hundreds of servants, and especially his turbulent sons, was not a welcome visitor. Who could blame the peaceful inhabitants? Perhaps this explains Jacob's purchase of a boundary of land for an hundred pieces of silver. It lay, evidently, about Abraham's oak, a mile east of town, where the pass between the mountains opens into the fertile vale of Askar.

Everywhere the land is well watered. As

one walks the narrow streets of Shechem little rivulets follow him through the dirty gutters. Along the roads are many springs and rattling little brooks, which is unusual in a semi-arid land. And yet Jacob dug a well—a deep and expensive well—destined to become the most famous well on earth.

The Canaanites knew that water was Jacob's greatest necessity. They denied him water rights in vain hope thus to be rid of him. But he sank his well a good hundred feet through soil and rock, and drank of the water, himself, and his sons, and his cattle. This explains the well of the Water of Life in a land abounding in springs of living water.

Jacob's stay was cut short by the humiliation of his only daughter, Dinah, and the treachery and bloody vengeance of her brothers.

To Shechem came Joseph gorgeously arrayed in his coat of many colors seeking these same blood-thirsty brothers. The natives sent him to Dothan and his doom.

To this beloved son, lost and found, Jacob bequeathed the parcel of land near Shechem. And here they laid Joseph's bones, brought out of Egypt at the Exodus. The tomb is a few hundred yards from the well. Perhaps it was Joseph's desire to be laid here; or, perhaps, it was Joshua's order. One would naturally have expected Joseph to be laid in the cave of Machpelah near Hebron. When the land was divided among the tribes Shechem was given to Manasseh, the elder son of Joseph. Revered by Jew, Christian and Moslem alike the tomb of Joseph has never been defiled.

Long before Israel crossed the Jordan, Moses commanded them to move to this valley and on

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the slopes of Mount Ebal to erect an altar of unhewn stone. The description of Ebal and Gerizim is exact: "Are they not beyond the Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites that dwell in the Arabah over against Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh?"

Joshua obeyed the command to the letter. His first objective after the fall of Jericho was Shechem. It was wise military strategy, for the twin mountains and the pass between them are the key of Palestine.

As the host lay here the blessings of obedience were read from the slopes of Gerizim, and the curses thundered from Ebal. The vale is so narrow that one can easily shout from slope to slope.

Joshua's last act was to gather a national assembly at Shechem. He made his farewell address, and urged the familiar alternative, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." He wrote the great covenant, and set up a stone of remembrance "under the oak that was by the sanctuary."

"By the oak of the pillar," in the ruthless days of the Judges, Abimeleck a natural and unworthy son of Gideon was crowned a local king. It is noteworthy that "the oak" of Shechem is so often mentioned.

After the death of Solomon the land seethed with unrest and threatened rebellion. Rehoboam thought it wise, to be "elected" king at Shechem, rather than in the southern city of Jerusalem. Here the northern tribes demanded reforms which the stubborn young king denied. Rehoboam fled to Jerusalem and his rival Jeroboam wrested the larger half of the realm from his feeble grasp.

For a time Shechem was Jeroboam's capital, as it had long been a city of refuge.

After the deportation of the people, while Jerusalem lay waste, Sanballat rebuilt Shechem and vainly attempted to frustrate the rebuilding of Jerusalem. He built the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim from the slopes of which the blessings had been read so many centuries before. Sanballat was the first and ablest of Samaritan leaders. He was probably a descendant of the transported colonists for his name is Babylonish.

Alexander the Great destroyed Samaria and removed the remnants of the Samaritans to Shechem. Sanballat's temple was destroyed by the great Maccabean warrior John Hyrcanus. The ruins were plainly visible from the valley below and no doubt the Samaritan woman pointed to them when she said to Jesus, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain."

In the shadow of Gerizim Justin Martyr was born about seventy years after the Crucifixion of Our Lord.

There remain to this late day a community of Samaritans in Shechem, "the oldest and smallest sect in the world." In their liturgy and prayers they use the ancient Samaritan dialect, but the language of the streets is, of course, Arabic. Three times a year they celebrate the Mosaic feasts upon the summit of Gerizim. Their great feast is of course the Passover. Here alone, through long ages of poverty and persecution the ritual of Moses survives.

We threaded a series of dark tunnelled lanes and came forth to the glad sunlight in a little court before the Samaritan synagogue. It is a small building, bare and uninviting, into

which we peered from time to time as we were not invited to enter.

The brethren did not seem to be busy. Young and old stood about, clad in holy but dirty clothes. Ah, their beards! How often, oh how often we wished that razors would become fashionable with the men of the East. May manifold blessings rest up Mr. Gillett or any other man who makes shaving popular.

In a few minutes Isaac, the High Priest, came forth looking very much the survivor and representative of the patriarchs of old. His was a shrewd but kindly face of distinctively Hebrew cast. He at least was clean, and handsomely dressed, dignified and unhurried. He claims to be of the blood of Levi, and he sustains the part admirably. I rather suspected that Father Isaac arrayed himself in pontifical robes after we arrived. The apparel oft proclaims the man, you know. While he chatted pleasantly with our guide I watched him narrowly and made a few notes, unobserved.

He wore a white turban wound about a red fez in the approved, oriental style. His beard, long and white, fell full to his waist, for I reckon the high priest to be a man of sixty. A gown of fine, yellow silk fell to his ankles, over which he wore a white tunic, elegantly embroidered with elaborate designs, which were, no doubt, symbolical. His feet were bare, but he wore soft slippers.

At his word the Samaritan Codex, was brought forth for our inspection. They handled it with reverence and scrupulous care. It was covered with bluish-green fabric of rich quality. The manuscript is kept in a case of hand-wrought brass, with three knobs representing the "three blessings of Israel." The

case is nine centuries old, and the parchment much cracked and broken in places, is one of the oldest in the world. It has recently been photographed in its entire length.

The long July day was closing in. The tunnels were already as dark as the coming night. Our rude hotel had once been a monastery. And we slept peacefully that night in the monks' cells. As the gentle mists of grateful slumber gathered over me, I thought of the brothers gone so long, who wept and prayed within these walls and fought their battles with sin, the flesh and the Devil; successfully, every one of them, let us hope.

XVII.

THE WELL OF THE WATER OF LIFE.

It is an old, old road that leads over the heights of Mt. Ephraim, for the last chapter of Judges describes this highway from Jerusalem and the South to Shechem and the cities of the North. The traveler, northbound, comes forth unexpectedly upon a lofty promontory. It is the bold face of Mt. Ephraim frowning down the long valley that leads by easy grades among mountains and hills to Samaria, Galilee and the valley of Jordan.

The view is superb. Deep gorges and steep hillside are set to the olive, cactus and almond. The picturesque ruins of a mediaeval castle, crumbling on an adjacent height, beckon across the centuries from the times of Tancred.

The long valley, fat and fertile, with the homes of the farmers clustering in miserable villages on the flanks of the hills, stretches as far as eye can see to the north. Ragged peaks stand like scouts in broken line to the east and beyond them the muddy Jordan descends to the Sea of Death.

To the west are other peaks in solemn serrate ranks, among which Gerizim and Ebal tower as monarchs of the mountain mass. On the far horizon Gilboa and Tabor may be distinguished, and on a clear day even distant Hermon's frosty crown is lifted against the deep blue of the sky.

Down the face of the precipice the Turko-German military roads leads in easy grades. Seen from afar it looks like a gigantic Z laid on the face of Mt. Ephraim. The men who loiter about the fountain of Lebonah at the base of

the bluff look like specks on the dusty ribbon of road, and the women who carry their water jars to the village look like ants crawling along a brown thread, laid on a great, green cloth.

Near this village the young Benjaminites stole their wives at the advice of the Judges. Benjamin had been almost exterminated by civil strife. The men had no wives. So they hid among the green foliage of the vineyards when the maids of Ephraim and Manasseh danced at a festival. Each young lover chose his damsel, rushed out of ambush, captured her and bore her to his home in the hills of Benjamin. As one reads the ancient narrative he wonders whether the damsels did not know their future husbands were watching furtively. Modern maids do not object to an adventure, especially if an attractive young man is the hero.

King Saul and St. Paul came of Benjamin's blood. We find ourselves wondering whether the brides stolen at the festival of Lebonah were among the ancestors of the future king and great apostle.

This road has been pressed by many millions of feet. Camels and asses, and men and women, spurning the long detour and easy grades, choose the old path directly up the mountain. Jesus once came this way. His face was set toward Galilee and He must needs pass through Samaria. His progress must have been slow, as mile by mile He passed these humble villages, and taught, healed, argued or explained. It was a tedious road and fatiguing labor. The fifteen miles that stretch from Lebonah to Shechem would likely make a long day.

As the valley opens between Ebal and Gerizim the road forks. One road holds north-

ward, and brings the traveler at last to the Upper Jordan and the lower beaches of the Sea of Galilee. The other road turns sharply to the west, passes under the shadows of Gerizim and into Shechem, thence to Samaria, Esdraelon and Nazareth. Within the fork of the road Jacob dug his well.

The wearied Saviour reached this grateful place of rest as the long shadows of evening flung their purple mantels over the valley clad in the rich green of a Levantine February. (Some excellent authorities place the "sixth hour" at noon.) It was still more than a mile to Shechem, and through a thickly populated district. The village of Sychar is perched like the nest of a bird on a ridge of Mt. Ebal, half a mile across the green fields, but not in the direction of Shechem. All were tired and hungry. Jesus sat on the stone coping of the well while His disciples hurried to the village to buy provisions and return.

A Samaritan woman came to the well with her water-jar. She doubtless lived in Shechem. There the Samaritans have lived since Alexander the Great removed them from Samaria. If she came from Shechem she had passed many fine and wholesome springs.

Why did she seek the water of Jacob's well, her father Jacob, as she liked to call him? No doubt in groping toward a better life the woman was seeking holy water. Many wiser and better women than she have sought and still seek spiritual grace by applying the water of holy wells, as in Quebec and France and Italy to this day.

The wearied Jewish rabbi asked of her the favor of a drink. She was astonished that any

Jew, especially a holy and haughty Jewish rabbi, would notice much less speak to her. More especially was she surprised that he would ask a favor, and most especially that such a high and holy man would touch, and drink from a vessel contaminated by a Samaritan dog of a woman! It was truly marvelous!

"Ah," replied the Stranger. "If you really understood, you would ask of Me the water of life."

"You have nothing but two empty hands and the well is a hundred feet deep. I don't see," said the practical woman, "much chance for you to draw water for me."

"The water that I give springs up within the soul. It is the water of life."

"Sir, that's the holy water I greatly desire."

"If you desire the Water of Life, call your husband and come with him to Me," replied the Stranger, tactfully touching the sore spot of a soiled life.

"I have none."

"You are right. You have none. You have had five."

"It is just as I suspected," said the woman, "you are a prophet laying bare the sinful secrets of my life; but if you want to argue religion, I can hold my own even with a Jewish rabbi."

"I do not wish to argue Jerusalem and Gerizim. Wheresoever men live they can love and worship God. God is a spirit. They that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The place is not material."

"Oh, I know about the Messiah Moses prom-

ised. He will teach us everything when He comes."

"I that speak unto Thee, am He:"

The disciples returned. The woman left in such haste that she forgot the jar she had brought.

In a little while they resumed their walk toward Shechem, for night was falling. A great multitude met Jesus on the road. The woman had brought them to see the wonderful Rabbi who said He was the Messiah, and she believed that He was! They would not let Him depart. He remained two days, probably resuming his journey northward after a second night in the ancient and historic town.

It was early morning. The sun was just peeping over the eastern mountain summits, and his golden rays lay warm upon the bare, brown fields of the Vale of Askar.

We knocked at the great oak door of the Greek monastery. At last a monk, bearded, bare of feet and tanned a deep brown, unlocked the gate and we passed into a mean little garden. A few oleanders grew about an ancient well. He led us into the nave of the church—it will be the nave of a handsome church when completed.

In front of where the altar will stand the monk provided tapers by the feeble, flickering light of which we descended twenty steps to the crypt, in the midst of which was the well we sought. The Greeks allow no images in their churches, but the usual altars, pictures, gaudy ornaments were in evidence; the usual postcards and souvenirs were for sale.

A Christian church had been built here in the days of Constantine. It was destroyed by



Greek Orthodox Church rising slowly on Crusader foundations over Jacob's Well near Shechem.

the Mohammedans and rebuilt by the Crusaders, only to be destroyed again when the Christians were thrust out by Saladin.

In the last century funds have been gathering slowly for the restoration of the church. No doubt in another generation the church will rise again, more beautiful than ever.

The monk lowered six lighted candles into the well and we peered below with intense interest. The walls of the well are round, set in good, substantial stone. Still lower the well sinks through the native rock, dug by Jacob's own servant no doubt, but of this I could not be sure, for the light was dim and the distance great. The water is about one hundred feet below the crypt. As the Samaritan woman truly said, "The well is deep."

Until recently the well was partially filled and dry. But the monks now keep it in good repair.

The monk raised the lights and let down a bucket. Sweeter, purer water I never tasted. It seemed almost sacrilegious to drink.

Many enthusiastic travelers bring bottles of water from Jordan. To me the pure water of this well seems holier than the muddy water of Jordan, for this is the water that Jesus used to illustrate one of the greatest of His sermons. This is the Well of the Water of Life.

XVIII.

AWAITING THE KING.

All roads from the north and east and many from the west pour their human tide upon one great highway that leads over the lofty hills of Benjamin toward Jerusalem, the city of the King. It is worth waiting a lifetime to set foot upon that historic highway. The expense, fatigue and trials of travel through many an alien city and over many boundless seas are well worth while if one may, at last, turn his face toward Jerusalem, the supreme city of the world. Through the intense, blinding glare of the brilliant mid-summer sun the towers and minarets swam into view.



A Street in Jerusalem.

They call Rome the Eternal City. But that name is usurped. Jerusalem was a proud capital twelve centuries, and more beside, before the foundations of Alba Longa were laid on the hills of Tiber. From Melchizedek to this good day, from the days of Noah to the anticipated

second advent of our Lord, and perhaps for a thousand years beyond His second coming Jerusalem is the Eternal City, and the only eternal city. In ruin and wretchedness, in desolation, disgrace and despair she is still the magnet of the world. Jerusalem is unique in her appeal to the heart of the world. Nor does she appeal in vain. Today as in the days of David, of Christ, of the Crusaders, Jerusalem is an unrivalled queen.

In the dim twilight of history she was Salem, the City of Peace, and her king was Melchizedek, the Prince of Peace. Melchizedek was old when Abraham was young; in fact, there are some scholars who identify Melchizedek with Shem, the priestly son of Noah.

While Israel sojourned in Egypt the Jebusites made their capital on these hills; and remained until the bulwarks of Mount Zion were captured by great Joab's dauntless sword. David gathered the united tribes of Israel here, and for twenty generations a man was not wanting in David's royal line; although candor compels one to add that some of Judah's kings had less of David's heroic spirit than of his blood.

It is not David, but David's Greater Son whose feet have trod this sacred soil and made it holy above all lands. Jesus loved Jerusalem. He could not otherwise. His was the blood of David, the blood of Abraham, and possibly the blood, certainly the office, of Melchizedek. The call of the blood of 3,000 years, of 120 generations, surged within Him when He cried:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto

her! How often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

Jerusalem has not said that word, but she will come to it as surely as there is truth in prophecy, as surely as there is a God in heaven.

This is the city of the Crucifixion, of the Resurrection, of the Ascension, of Pentecost and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is the cradle of Christendom, the source of all that is good. Now so barren, the streams of religion and civilization have flowed hence to all the earth.

How can a skeptic account for the influence of Jerusalem? Without Jesus Christ this is a filthy, crowded, conglomerate, ruined, malodorous, Oriental town. With Him it is the heart and the hope of the world, the City of the Coming King, once disowned and rejected.

Within the steep and narrow streets of Jerusalem a constant confusion of tongues, and a motley variety of costumes greets the stranger. Every language on earth may be heard here today, unless it be Choctaw, and every possible variety of dress may be seen, as in the days of Pentecost.

“Who are these gentlemen in long black coats, shovel hats and delightful little curls, which fall like a fetlock in front of each ear?”

Russian Jews.

“And who are these thickly bewhiskered gentlemen with monstrous hoods, like Hallowe’en witches, ropes about their waists and



At the Damascus Gate, Jerusalem. Page 166.

immense, bare feet peeping flirtatiously from the hem of long, dirty gowns?"

Armenian monks.

"Who are these extremely holy and patriarchal-looking brothers, who evidently need a shave and a prolonged shower bath. They wear stovepipe hats, like Abraham Lincoln, only these have a flange at the top like a car-wheel?"

Greek priests.

"Who comes here? A nut-brown brother with flying eagles, coiled serpents and rampant wild beasts of the jungle done all over him, face, neck, arms and legs, in blue tattoo, making an ugly man hideous."

Bedouins.

"Don't all these gentlemen know they are out of style? Dresses should fall little if any below the knee. The long skirts on these streets remind me of fine American ladies in Mr. Cleveland's second administration. Pray, somebody tell these Bedouins, Arabs, negroes, Armenians, Syrians, Egyptians, Greeks, Jews, Copts and Palestinians that they ought, by all means, to shorten their skirts and get into style."

"These gentlemen are modest, you know," my friend replied.

"Well, this one is not modest. A strong man, tanned a deep brown, wild-eyed, haggard, bewhiskered, almost naked, save for a piece of guano sack tied about him."

"He is a holy, wild man. Don't notice him; he is dangerous, probably crazy. If he notices you give him a piastre and get away as speedily as possible."

Enough said. There is no end to the pro-

cession of curious folk who throng the narrow, filthy, cobblestoned streets and bazaars of Jerusalem.

It was early Sunday morning a military band sounded in the streets and attracted a great crowd. Behind the band swung a column of fresh-faced British lads, who looked for the most part too young for regular soldiers. They were marching to church. It is an item of Great Britain's tactful, colonial policy. The horns flare, the drums beat, the flag flutters in the breeze, officers and men make a brave show in the sunlight of early morning. They carry ugly looking guns, tipped with steel bayonets that glisten savagely in the peaceful sunshine. They are marching, this unit of a disciplined army—just to church! But when they have passed every brown Arab, every naked Dervish, every rebellious Moslem and grumbling Palestinian knows that England has come to stay. The touch is a touch of velvet, but under it is a grip of iron, respected and feared in six continents. The lads were mostly from Yorkshire and Kent. Marching they seemed to say, "We don't want trouble with anybody, but if you want to know who is boss here, start something."

I followed them into the English church—Christ Church—and enjoyed the quiet and restful service. The familiar prayers were as balm to a weary soul. One never appreciates the beauty of the mother tongue until he is thrown into a babel of outlandish tongues.

The rector was a gentle, old man. I thought of the Vicar of Wakefield. The sermon was brief, simple and helpful in its practical sympathy. The congregation was made up almost wholly of soldiers and their families.

At the end of the service we stood to sing "God Save the King." The soldier boys caught up the words with hearty good-will and their deep bass voices floated far out upon Mount Zion. Just over the way was the Tower of David, which the antiquarians claim was one of the melancholy monuments Titus left standing at the destruction of Jerusalem. Within a pistol shot was the reputed site of David's palace of cedar-wood. Nearby was the Pool of Gihon, by the side of which young Solomon was anointed king. I thought of Rehoboam, Hezekiah and the long line of Judah's kings. I thought of the Maccabean high-priests, of Herod, of Baldwin and the Crusaders, of Saladin and the Turks. Now it is George V. It seemed strange, this blending, the oldest of the old with the newest of the new.

"Send him victorious
Long to reign over us,
God save the king."

It was reverence, and loyalty, and victory, determination and enthusiasm. To the bottom of my heart I said, "Amen." The deep voices were more powerful than musical as they floated out and died in the hot air.

King George is but a servant, preparing the way for the coming of Zion's King. One feels it more in Jerusalem than in any place on earth. These streets are filled with a history that crowns the summit of every hill. Each crumbling column is a written page, but the best is yet to be!

Did you ever step into a great church and feel instinctively, "The Lord is here?" You could not explain it, but involuntarily you step lightly, hush the tones of your voice and look

about you with humility and reverence. It is sometimes called a spiritual atmosphere—whatever that means. If a door were to open softly and Jesus Christ, crowned with thorns and clad in a purple, blood-stained robe, were to step forth you would not be shocked, but you would feel that His presence was consistent with the setting.

That is the way one feels in Jerusalem. The spirit of Christ is in the air. Oh, there are ever filthy Jews and fanatical Moslems, and frantic enthusiasts of the decadent Christian sects. There are ever leprous beggars, naked children, and the wreck and ruin of ages. It is to admit all that. But, despite all there is a distinct feeling that Jesus is coming—and coming here. I was the more surprised as I have never developed any great enthusiasm for the widespread pre-millenarian views now so popular with many in our church.

Jerusalem's glorious history is in the future, not the past. The best is yet to be. The world is old, but it is still morning. The year is in the spring. It is the fountain head of civilization, not the end. It is the prelude of religion, not the finale. Jerusalem that has been is nothing to the Jerusalem yet to be.

I have stood on a crowded street and awaited the coming of a distinguished stranger, the President several times, the King and Queen of England once. Under these circumstances there is always a subdued air of expectancy. It cannot be defined by a psychologist; but everyone feels it, and understands it.

That is Jerusalem. The city, the land, is waiting for Somebody. You feel it constantly. Instinctively you want to get ready. You

would push the stolid natives along and urge them to look about, for you know Jerusalem is not ready. Somebody is apt to find the city as He will likely find the world unprepared.

That Somebody is Jesus.

He is coming again.

And when He comes again to this weary world, He will alight first on Mount Olivet and make His real triumphal entry into Jerusalem, as the Ascension angels foretold.

“This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven.”

XIX.

CALVARY.

For many centuries the exact site of the crucifixion of our Blessed Lord, and the location of the tomb in which He lay was not known. Such a statement seems incredible. But one must remember that forty years after the death of Jesus, Jerusalem was taken by Titus, following one of the bloodiest and most desperate sieges in history. It is estimated by Josephus that the incredible number 1,100,000 Jews perished at this time! Jesus vividly and circumstantially foretold the frightful days ahead of Jerusalem. His words were exactly fulfilled. The Abomination of Desolation floated over a city which was an uninhabited ruin. The Romans left three towers along the western wall as monuments to their triumph and pathetic memorials of the glory that had departed from Israel.

For sixty years the city lay waste. It is curious how that number runs like a thread through Hebrew history. A round century after the death of Jesus (130 A. D.), the Emperor Hadrian visited the East and rebuilt the city as a Roman colony. Jews were forbidden to enter it. He changed the name to Aelina Capitalina—"Capital of Hadrian."

This explains how the sacred sites of Jerusalem—including the most sacred site in all the world—were lost to human memory.

About three centuries after Christ the Empress Helena, a devoted Christian, the mother of the first Christian emperor, Constantine, gave a great impetus to the construction of churches on hallowed, historic places.

St. Helena located the site of the Crucifixion and of the tomb of Jesus on the spot now occupied by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. She even discovered and identified the True Cross in a miraculous manner. The story is well told by John L. Stoddard.

“In this spot she found three crosses—those upon which the two thieves hung, as well as that of Christ. The problem was to know which was the sacred one. To settle it they were taken to the bedside of a devout woman, who was very ill. When she beheld the first cross she became a raving maniac. They tried the second. Immediately she went into fright-



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

ful spasms and six strong men could hardly hold her. Naturally they hesitated to bring in the third cross. Still as she was about to die it could only put her out of misery. They

brought it in and, lo! the afflicted woman was completely restored. This was therefore proclaimed the True Cross of Christ."

That St. Helena located the wrong site needs almost no argument. We are expressly told that Jesus was led without the city wall. That He was crucified upon a hilltop. That His tomb was in a garden very near the site of the crucifixion. That the hill was called Golgotha, meaning the Place of a Skull. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, though so devoutly revered by the Roman, Greek, Armenian, Coptic and other Christians, is in the heart of the present city. It is in a depression as low as the Pool of Hezekiah. The so-called tomb is not on the side of a hill—dug out of a rock—but in the midst of the nave of the church. I regret to say, but must say, that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is the most gigantic pious-fraud on earth!

For centuries men believed whatever they were told. But when education and intelligence increased, and Christian people, especially from Britain and America, began to visit Jerusalem, with open Bibles in their hands, they declined to receive these impostures without question.

The scholarship of the world has more and more come to regard the bare hill to the north of the city near the Damascus Gate as the true site of Calvary. It is often called "Gordon's Calvary," because the noble, saintly British soldier, Chinese Gordon, after long, careful and accurate study became convinced that this hill was the true site, and that a tomb on the western slope of the hill was the place in which the body of Jesus was laid.

This site satisfies all the conditions of the

narrative. It is without the walls, but immediately over the city. It is on a rounded hill-top, to this day surrounded by caves and gardens.

The hill is in plain view of the entire city, except the southern edge; and as one views it from the city it resembles a skull, for the hill has a rounded top like the head of a man. Three caves, one large below, two smaller above, correspond strikingly to the cavities of a skull. And over the eye-sockets dried and dusty bushes hang in long, ugly festoons, roughly resembling eyebrows. The similarity is so striking that it can be seen even in the pictures of amateur photographers. When the evening shadows fall, and during the misty days of the rainy season I dare say that Calvary would fully justify the name "Golgotha," Place of a Skull.

Some years since an English clergyman with the familiar name of Smith raised a fund and purchased the small garden and tomb under the side of this hill. It is now held by trustees in England. It was a great disappointment that we were denied entrance to the tomb. A foul murder had recently been committed there. A wealthy English lady visited the tomb with an Arab guide. Next morning they found her body, but the Arab was gone. Though we numbered a dozen strong men, and no Arab, and though we applied twice, insistently, offering bakhshish, which works all manner of miracles in the East, the only response was: "Door locked, key lost."

The Kaiser's clock upon the Jaffa Gate struck twelve. It was Friday, the Moslem Sabbath, August 5th. A sultry sun blazed in the Syrian sky. The stoutest plants hung limp



Calvary from the Garden.

and listless under his intense ardor. Strong men sought the shade of graceful palms and green oleanders. We mopped our beaded foreheads in impotent disappointment. I walked to the end of the garden and peeped over a steep terrace. It was fifty feet to the bottom of the larger cave previously mentioned. A bedizened Bedouin woman was cooking a bit of bread on a brazier of charcoal. Above me, fifty feet or more, were the eye-socket caves,

the dusty eyebrows, the summit of Calvary—the spot, the very spot, on which the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified—the supreme site of all creation! Save only the Great White Throne in heaven, no spot is more holy than this. Did I wish to climb to it? Judge for yourself.

I sauntered back to the perspiring group and asked the guide casually (for I felt instinctively that he would not approve) if we might climb Calvary.

He turned upon me quickly and spoke with unusual sharpness and emphasis, for he was the most obliging and courteous of men. “By no means. It is dangerous. It is Friday. You cannot go to the top.” I knew well enough that all riots and most of the murders and police troubles were incident to Friday. The day is an invitation to Mohammedan fanaticism. I am a meek and spiritless man, even more meek abroad than at home. It was too sultry to argue. I seated myself helplessly under the oleanders.

After a bit I wandered again to the terrace. The bejeweled woman far below me was eating her lunch.

I looked up. Calvary seemed to beckon. I had traveled 7,000 miles to see it. We are shut out of the sepulchre. It’s the one chance of a lifetime. Why shouldn’t a real man take a chance? The guide and party were hidden by the foliage of the garden. I hid kodak and guide-book under a cactus. I’ll climb to the eye-sockets in any case. It was not easy; but other feet had evidently passed along the ledges of this feverish rock, as hot as an oven to the touch. Ten, twenty, thirty feet and I flung myself into the deep, cool shade of the

eye-socket cave. Both these caves were shallow. No one seemed to notice me, or miss me, not even the guide. I felt like a naughty school-boy playing truant. If the guide saw me I knew he would order me down. And, if ordered, I would obey.

The rest of the climb was more difficult. Sometimes my footing was only a half-inch projection of the flinty rock. One slip, or a cracked bit of ledge, and I would have fallen into the cactus below, or I might have missed the terrace and gone down seventy-five feet, which would no doubt have disturbed the Bedouin lady now taking a siesta after lunch. And no Virginia gentleman would disturb a lady, even a Bedouin lady, when she is taking a nap. It was risky, but a real adventure. At last I reached the top and threw myself prone on the dead grass.

Far below Arabs were driving their camels and asses to and from the Damascus Gate. None gave me the passing tribute of a glance. The brilliant sun lay hot on the flat roofs of the city, for all Jerusalem was spread before me as a map done in high relief.

I cautiously looked about. To my amazement I was in a Moslem cemetery. I understood now the guide's prohibition. The foot-fall of an infidel dog upon a Moslem grave is outrageous profanity. The presence of a Christian is an insult to every crumbling Moham-medan corpse.

On the crest of the hill, upon the highest point, the very spot on which the central cross had been lifted a hideous Moslem tomb is erected. I cannot describe the resentment that surged within me! I could have wept, I could have set hands upon it and torn it away. Oh,

that I might have had such an opportunity. The thought of that dead Arab lying there haunts me to this moment. A Mohammedan grave is as hideous and as hopeless as their religion. It seems inconsistent, but I can bring myself (in a way) to thank God for that presumptuous Moslem tomb. That vile cemetery, as disgusting as it is, has been the hill's protection. God, no doubt, has a purpose. It saves the site from just such quasi-religion as is exhibited daily at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

I found relief from the blistering heat in the shadow of a stout wall that marks the boundary of the cemetery. The view is superb. Nowhere else on earth is such a panorama spread. Not in St. Peter's at Rome; not in Westminster Abbey. The salvation of the world, and the reason for all things, visible and invisible, is spread upon these hills!

On every side the "Hill of the Skull" falls away. And on every side beyond the shallow valley the heights rise a perfect circle, to the horizon. It is as a saucer reversed in the bottom of a large bowl.

Upon the cross, Jesus dying, faced south. The whole city of Jerusalem lay plainly before Him from nine to twelve o'clock that fatal April morning. Just beyond the city wall the Roman section, with the palace of Pontius Pilate, was nearest to Jesus. In the immediate distance the magnificent Temple, its area covering one-fourth the city, was plainly, obviously, conspicuously before Him.

From the place of His crucifixion, Jesus could see the Mount of Olives, on the shoulder of which He had wept over Jerusalem, and at the foot of the mount, the Garden of

Gethsemane, in which He had poured forth His soul in agony, until they apprehended Him.

I do not know what buildings stood on the western heights in Jesus' day; but that August Friday the British flag fell limply over headquarters—the only flag in sight. Beyond a group of French buildings crown the hillside, and further a magnificent group of buildings, once Russian, now used by the English for barracks towered over the French.

To the north were the handsome homes of the American and English colonies. Conspicuous among the latter was St. George's Church, St. George's School, and the Bishop's residence.

To the east thousands of crosses, standing sadly in solemn rows, mark the resting place of the last Crusaders, the English lads who gave their blood to put the Triple Cross of Great Britain upon the staff below. Not far from the military cemetery Sir Herbert Samuel, the enlightened Hebrew-English statesman, lives in a palace the late Kaiser erected on the summit of Olivet. Beyond the governor's residence a tower, by far the tallest building in these parts, pierces the sky. One can see it from Jericho and from Bethlehem. It was built by Russians to mark the site of the Ascension.

I lay in the shadow for half an hour and drank in the details spread before me, as a thirsty soul. I had not noticed the cannon—a Turkish cannon on Calvary! I examined it and, lo, its rusting mouth was trained directly upon the handsome dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in the midst of the Christian section of the city. The Turks had evidently left it in their precipitate retreat. I

ran my hand over the great gun. One spoke of a wheel was loose. I brought it away, and now it is done into two gavels.

It was time to leave. The descent seemed easier to the East, and also I would not have to face the guide, so I started boldly through the cemetery for Brook Kedron. I had gone but a little way when, to my horror, I saw three Moslems digging a grave! I retreated instantly to the shadow of the wall and ran my hands into my pockets. If they came upon me I would buy them off with a liberal gift. They were so interested in their conversation that they did not notice my approach. I retreated as rapidly as a man may walk without seeming to run. At the bend of the wall I looked back and thanked my lucky stars, they were still busy over their gossip and their grave. I lost no time in flinging the cannon spoke into the cactus and descended carefully, ledge by ledge, the face of Calvary. My guide and my friends were gone; the keeper was obviously asleep in his cottage. I let myself out of the strong gate and breathed freely again when I mingled with the surging crowd at Damascus gate.

XX.

THINE ALTARS, JEHOVAH SABAOTH.

The supreme place of interest within the walls of Jerusalem is the site of the temple. It is so extensive and the city so small that it covers one-fourth of the superficial area of Jerusalem.

When one steps from the shadow of the narrow arcaded street upon this sacred site, once the exquisite temple of Solomon, later the less sumptuous temple of Zerubbabel and Haggai, and yet again the splendid temple of Herod, it is to utter an exclamation of astonishment and painful surprise. "The Abomination of Desolation," I cried, quoting the words of our Lord. It is Jerusalem without her King!

The immense, open court is paved with broken flags and well-worn cobble-stones, which reflect the brilliant glare of the sun. Broken arches, fallen columns, crumbling walls, heaps of rubbish, ashes, filth, decaying houses, standing next the open area, their interiors exposed, present a scene of hopeless desolation. Here and there a stunted tree has braved the barrenness of the court. Sickly green weeds, covered thick with dust, accentuate rather than soften the unutterable dreariness. No city on earth needs Jesus so conspicuously and candidly as Jerusalem. And in all Jerusalem no spot needs Him more acutely and immediately than the temple, in which His apprehension and execution were contrived and manipulated. It was in a retired chamber of Herod's temple that Jesus was done to death, rather than in Gethsemane and on Calvary. He was assassinated in His Father's house.

No spot on earth is so rich in memories pleasant and painful. It is the stage set for the divine tragedy.

Melchizedek, the priest-king, probably of-



The Mosque of Omar in the midst of the Temple area.

fered sacrifices here. Here Abraham was about to offer Isaac in obedience to the strange, divine command. He found the ram, a substitute, a type of our Saviour, whose blood was shed a ransom for others. On this hilltop

David saw the angel of vengeance with drawn sword, and here Solomon by his father's express command erected the temple.

From the castle immediately to the north a bit of which may still be seen, Titus witnessed the burning of Herod's temple (70 A. D.). Exactly one hundred years after the crucifixion of Christ, Hadrian built a handsome temple to Jupiter, with magnificent statues to the Roman god and to himself. Many fragments of Hadrian's temple, especially the columns, are used in the present buildings. Whether there was an early Christian church before the days of Mohammed is not known, probably not. But, when the Moslems took the East, Mount Moriah became their holiest site, after Mecca. The Mosque of Omar was built (691 A. D.) and became a Christian church during the crusades. When mighty Saladin drove out the Christians the crescent again replaced the cross over the Dome of the Rock. And the crescent is there today, a crescent dying never to wax again.

It is said that the stricter Jews will not enter these courts lest they tread involuntarily upon the site of the Holy of Holies. The most expert antiquarian cannot say where the most holy place was located, but it gives one pause for sober thought as he reflects that in walking thoughtlessly to and fro over these decaying pavements he has certainly passed within that holy cube.

It is more than likely that the foundations of Herod's temple and possibly a part of Solomon's temple may be located. Scientific excavation and research may now be made within the limits of this land. Another generation

will yield up many a secret hidden these two thousand years.

The temple area is roughly a square. It measures approximately 1,600 feet from north to south, 1,000 feet from east to west

In the haughty days of Turkish pride Christian dogs were not admitted, or if admitted here, it was only by special grace, after long delay, with vexatious restrictions and under strict surveillance. Black dervishes with drawn swords were stationed at each of the seven gates. It was all very effective and very circumspect. In those days the precincts were crowded with fanatical worshippers and frantic devotees of the prophet. All is changed. The humblest may enter as he pleases, and come and go at will. I frequently walked across the area to save time, and I liked to linger here when occasion offered. Gone forever are the frantic worshippers (except perhaps of a Friday). We had the entire mountain top to ourselves when we spent an August Thursday morning there with our guides. Of course, in the mosques one must don the holy slippers—mere filthy rags, more dusty than one's shoes. Also a gratuity must be given the bewhiskered, holy monks, who patiently doze on the floor while they await your coming.

There is a vast platform in the midst of the area, elevated eight or ten feet. One mounts flights of broken marble steps, under elegant arcades, of Gothic arches springing gracefully from tall, slender pillars of stone. In the midst of the elevated platform, on the summit of Mount Moriah, is the Mosque of Omar. It has been described by enthusiastic writers in the highest terms of praise, one of the architec-

tural gems of the world. It is beautiful, lofty, airy, exquisitely proportioned and altogether unique, and yet I could not enthuse into rapturous superlatives.

The Mosque of Omar is an octagon, each side of which is more than sixty feet in length. The lower part is of marble, the upper of choicest porcelain. Texts from the Koran run about the walls, the queer, Arabic characters lending themselves well to ornamentation, looking not unlike the delicate tracery of the naked forest when the sun throws soft shadows on the snow-covered ground of a winter's day. Strange as it may seem, the passages selected for display have frequent reference to Jesus. Their chief object is to deny His divinity. One of them reads, "The Messiah Jesus is only the son of Mary, the ambassador of God." Again, "Do not maintain that there are three gods. God is One, far be it from Him that He should have a son." Again, "Praise be to God, who has no son nor any companion in His government." Our Unitarian friends would feel perfectly at home without the labor or expense of altering the quotations from the Koran.

The four sides of the octagon that face the cardinal points have spacious and handsomely wrought bronze doors, elegantly chased. Visitors usually enter from the west. The interior is lighted by many lofty, stained-glass windows.

Magnificent monoliths stand in concentric circles, and a screen divides the wide space within. In the center is the bare and naked rock, over which the dome floats, anchored upon four grouped pilasters and twelve pillars. Two concentric aisles encircle the rock and

the screen that protects it from human touch and hence infidel pollution. Eight pilasters and sixteen pillars divide this foyer (pardon the worldly phrase) into two aisles, the outer slightly narrower than the aisle within.

The handsome dome was built in 1022. It is an hundred feet high surmounted, of course, by a crescent.

The screen of handsomely wrought iron was probably set in place around the rock by the Crusaders. The floor of the mosque is marble laid in intricate mosaic, covered in part with rugs.

The rock, approximately sixty feet long by forty wide, rises six feet above the floor. It is, of course, the summit of Mount Moriah, and authorities agree, for the most part, that Solomon erected the great altar of burnt offering upon it. If so, this was the center of the Holy Place. In support of this view conduits may still be traced by which the sacrificial blood was led into vast chambers and pools below the rock. As yet these caverns have not been fully explored.

If this is indeed the site of the Holy Place, the Holy of Holies lay a little to the west of the rock, and would likely be near the western portal. The veil torn by angelic hands from top to bottom at the Crucifixion hung not far from the western doors. The steps of Degrees lay immediately east of the rock, and opened into the Court of the Women, still further east. The Sanhedrin's chamber was to the south, not far from the south door of the mosque. The raised platform on which the building stands marks the boundary, or near boundary, of the eighteen-inch wall-of-partition beyond which no Gentile dared to pass.

The Court of the Gentiles or Nations lay without and below. In Herod's temple the southern part of this court was richly ornamented with quadruple rows of elegant, Corinthian columns.

The Beautiful Gate of the Temple at which Peter and John healed the lame beggar was probably between the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Women, in a direct line east of the High Altar. Solomon's Porch was an arcaded promenade swung far above the vale of Jehoshaphat and Brook Kedron, looking toward Mount Olivet.

Traditions interesting and grotesque cling to this rock like lichens to an aged oak. The ancient Jews said that the waters of the flood disappeared below the rock, and that one with acute hearing may still hear them roaring. Unfortunately, my hearing is dull!

Jeremiah is said to have concealed the Ark of the Covenant beneath the rock when Jerusalem was destroyed. If so he concealed it well, for it has never been found.

Some of the Jews said that Jesus wrought His miracles by learning the name of God, and that He found the name on this rock. It is strange that no one else found it, especially if so many knew it was written there.

The Moslems declare that all souls have a rendezvous under the rock and gather there to pray twice daily. Now, wouldn't it be a joy to attend that ghastly prayer meeting of Moslem ghosts? It would be more sensational than a Ku Klux Klan conclave in South Carolina.

When Mohammed had finished his work he sprang from this rock upon the back of a wondrous steed which bore him from earth to

heaven. The rock attempted to follow Mohamed and the horse, but an angel held it back. If you don't believe it you can see the mark the angel's fingers left on the rock.

Once or twice the rock has spoken, notably to the Calif Omar who built the wonderful dome. There is no reason why the rock should not speak. It has a tongue!

At the last judgment the throne of God will be established on this rock.

Just without the mosque is a graceful little ante-chamber called "David's Judgment Hall." A chain once hung there, and if a witness told a lie a link dropped from the chain. Ah, dear me, all the links are long since gone!

Our guide told a story worth repeating, because so typically Arabian.

A rich Moslem made the perilous journey to Mecca. He turned his property into gold and gems and entrusted the bag to his best friend.

When he returned he asked the friend for his wealth and the friend declared that he had not given him any such bag. A law case ensued. The erstwhile friends met here for cath and trial. There hung the chain. It could not be deceived. The plaintiff told his tale and swore that he had given the man the bag. No link fell. The defendant was invited to tell his tale. He handed a bundle to his friend to hold for him and swore that he had received the money, but that he had returned it to its rightful owner! No link fell. Long afterward it was discovered that the bundle the false friend handed to the plaintiff to hold while he swore was the rightful owner's own gold and gems, although neither plaintiff nor judge knew it!

To the extreme southern side of the temple court stands the great mosque of Aksa. It is said to have been erected by the Emperor Justinian in honor of the Virgin Mary. Though often altered and repaired, it is plain that Aksa is a Christian church. A grand nave flanked by a triple row of columns on each side leads from the front portal to the pulpit, where the altar once stood. The pulpit is of elegantly carved wood, inlaid with ivory and pearl. It is more than 750 years old.

The three courtiers of King Henry Plantagenet who murdered Thomas a Becket in the Cathedral of Canterbury were so haunted by their crime, and so hounded by public opinion, that they took the cross, came to Jerusalem as crusaders, died and are buried under the floor of Aksa—at least such is the popular tradition. Their dust has never been disturbed.



Gethsemane.

XXI.

THE BULWARKS OF ZION.

Jerusalem lies within a belt of stone. Crenelated walls, with loop-holes for archers, set here and there with medieval towers and pierced at long intervals by narrow, doubly protected gates, make her the most picturesque city in the world. Before the powerful guns of our modern battleships these walls are about as much protection as pasteboard. Yet let us hope they will never, never be razed. For they remind one of that fierce old Turk Suleiman, who built them (1542). They look like Richard our Lion-hearted king, and like Saladin his gallant foe. These ancient bulwarks of Zion are precious links in history.

The walls compass the city within a huge quadrangle. They are, roughly speaking, forty feet high, two and one-half miles long, swinging up and down steep grades to negotiate the sinuous surface of the hills. One may walk with ease entirely around them in one hour; and a wonderful experience it is. Every day the traveler encounters interesting objects and entertaining folk. Here sensations never fail.

Jerusalem is a growing and expanding city that refuses to be confined within the narrow limits of these walls of stone. It was large enough for David, for Herod, the Crusaders and Turks; but it is not large enough for modern days, nor for the spacious prosperity of the future. It resembles a magnolia whose pulsing life refuses to be confined within a dull brown bud. It bursts the calyx, flings out

its snow-white petals and fills the world with fragrance and beauty. London is such a city. Within the heart of the throbbing metropolis lies unchanged and undisturbed the quaint and quiet little germ from which the mighty "province of brick" has grown.

Broad boulevards lead away from the gates of Jerusalem. Suburbs stretch further northward and westward every year. The retail district, with post office, railway station, hotels and modern stores clusters without the Jaffa Gate.

A group of French public buildings stands to the north beyond David's Gate. The Roman Catholic propaganda centres here.

On the hillsides beyond the Damascus Gate are the handsome homes of the British and American colonies, the bishop's residence, St. George's Church (Anglican), and St. George's School. This is the centre of a rapidly increasing Protestant influence.

From present indications the future city will surround the old, unaltered, historic city, tucked away carefully and preserved reverently within medieval walls; as a priceless gem is treasured in a casket, or a holy relic in a reliquary.

According to the latest estimates (1921) there are 675,000 people in Palestine, one-fifth of whom live in the metropolitan district of Jerusalem. Of these 135,000 inhabitants it is estimated that ten per cent are Moslems, twenty per cent Christians of every conceivable stripe and variety, and the remainder are Jews, from every land under the sun. The Hebraic majority grows constantly. Every train and boat bring them additional recruits.

The Palestinians, who are a survival of the

Canaanites of old, bitterly resent the attitude of hospitality that Great Britain adopts toward the returning Jews. As I believe in the literal fulfillment of prophecy touching this land and race, all the nations on earth or devils in hell cannot, in my judgment, permanently alienate the title from the Jews. They hold from God Almighty through Abraham. Every previous alienation has been temporary, and the present is evidently passing rapidly. The land is coming into the personal possession of Jews about as fast as transfers can be made.

Along the walls are seven gates; an eighth, "The Golden Gate," opened directly from the Temple eastward. It has been closed for many centuries.

When the late Kaiser made his memorable tour of the East (1898), the Sultan, as a courtesy between excellent, good friends, had a wide gap made in the wall beside Jaffa Gate for his entry. It proved such a convenience that it has never been closed.

The Kaiser, not to be outdone, presented the city with a clock, set on a tower above Jaffa Gate. Two of its faces are Latin and two Arabic. I confess that I never was able to solve the riddle of Arabic time, although I acquired some dexterity in reading Arabic metre-stones by the roadside. General Allenby entered Jaffa Gate in December, 1917, with a British army; and it is characteristic that he entered afoot.

A delightful feature of our sojourn in Jerusalem was a Sunday afternoon prayer meeting in the parlors of the elegant home of Fred Vester, the merchant prince of the city. Mrs. Vester told me her war experiences. She is a

queenly woman and her narrative was vivid in its descriptive reality.

As the war in this theatre narrowed the suffering of all Europeans became more intense, until the climax came like a bolt. All Euro-



"The Kaiser presented Jerusalem with a clock, set on a tower above Jaffa Gate. Two of its faces are Latin, and two Arabic."

pean men were to be deported on a certain December day. The usual week's notice was given for preparation. As with the maids in Cana it was a week of desperation, agony, suspense and unspeakable anxiety and suffering. Deportation was usually merely a euphemism for assassination. The colony took itself to earnest and insistent prayer. The men prepared to depart, but they importuned the Throne of Grace as they had never prayed before.

The European women had spent the war years as Red Cross nurses, and the very hotel in which our party was quartered, just opposite Jaffa Gate, was a hospital. The fateful morning came. The roar of British guns to the west lulled somewhat. At any instant the men might be ordered to report for deportation.

Mrs. Vester labored that eventful morning in the hospital, praying, hoping, weeping, despairing by turns. Let any wife and mother measure the bitterness of her grief. It was just the stroke of ten by the Kaiser's clock over the way. She was binding the broken leg of a young Turk, when another nurse came quietly to the door and whispered in English: "The British are at Jaffa Gate."

She dropped the wounded soldier's leg and rushed into the street. There in the Kaiser's gap, astride a magnificent Arabian steed, like a statue a bronzed officer wearing the stripes of a colonel gazed down upon the motley crowd who curiously gazed up at him.

In the hysteria of joy Mrs. Vester rushed to the officer's side, grasped his stirrup in her arms and kissed the soiled straps of the har-

ness weeping the while as though her heart would break.

"What did he do?" I asked.

"He did not move a muscle, but his expression seemed to say 'Woman, are you demented?' Was it not silly of me," she added, but the tears stood in her eyes, and I confess that I felt a tightness in my throat.

The Damascus Gate, looking north, is the handsomest portal to the city, as it is one of the busiest. It is on or near the site of the "Fish Gate" of Scripture. If Jesus was crucified on Gordon's Calvary, He came through this gate, Simon bearing the cross. From this gate St. Paul left Jerusalem on his memorable journey, breathing out threatening and slaughter. The matchless cavalier and crusader Tancréd pushed his way into Jerusalem through the Damascus Gate.

As I paused there to watch the surging crowds of Jews and Arabs, camels and asses with their bales and boxes a nut-brown Arab accosted me, tapped my camera and pointed to his laden camel. I at once agreed. He and his son stepped behind their patient burdened beast and posed for a picture. Unfortunately he could not write, so I did not have the pleasure of sending him his photograph.

Jerusalem slopes toward the south, literally, physically, financially and hygienically. The hills are lower toward the south, the inhabitants poorer, more leprous and more filthy. The Jewish quarter reeks foul odors and oozes slime. At the lowest point there is "the Dung Gate," out of which the refuse of the city is cast into the valley.

In the Jewish quarter near the Dung Gate the Jews weep and wail beside the huge foun-

dation stones of the Temple. Perhaps some of these stones were set in Solomon's day.

The wailers were not so numerous the sultry afternoon of our visit, but on Saturday the lamentations of the faithful fill the air. What the mourners lacked in number, however, they made good in zeal, one old woman in particular. Evidently she was an expert, a worthy survival of the paid mourners of Scripture times. Pious Jews in distant countries employ these professionals to mourn for them. There was a rabbi, too, who was possessed of a good, stout pair of lungs and a voice like Stentor. He read a bit from the Psalms, then cried aloud. She would wait until the bewhiskered rabbi had finished and then come with a piercing, feminine shriek. The male came again, evidently repeating a quotation in his agony, for he kept an eye ever on his soiled book. From rock to rock they went, stopping at each; petting it as if it were a child, and wailing as if the child were dead. Some of the mourners were young men, evidently novices at the trade. Many write prayers on bits of paper and stick them in the crevices of the wall.

The mournful litany which runs after this fashion:

“For the palace that lies desolate,
We sit in solitude and mourn;
For the temple that is destroyed,
For the walls that are overthrown,
For the majesty that is departed,
For our great men who now lie dead,
For the precious stones now burned,
For the priests who have stumbled,
For our kings who have despised Him;
We sit in solitude and mourn.”

The sun leaned far westward as though to caress the hilltops beyond Mount Zion before he departed. His burning rays fell aslant across Jerusalem. Long shadows crept from the crumbling walls and slowly enfolded the Temple area. A breeze from the heights of Benjamin stirred the dusty, stunted trees, and promised a refreshing night. The crescent over the dome of the Mosque of Omar caught the full light of waning day and glowed like burnished silver against the deep blue sky above Olivet. As I gazed at the crescent I knew its days were numbered. A courteous Moham-medan guide by my side saw my glance and read my thought. He, too, knew that the crescent's day, like that August day, was dying.

XXII.

BETHLEHEM.

Precious memories travel with him who climbs the ascending road to Bethlehem! The feet of men have worn this dusty road since the age of Abraham. Jacob passed this way and here his beloved Rachel yielded up her life when Benjamin was born. He laid her in a tomb which has been respected and protected through the ages by Jew, Christian and Moslem alike. Along this road came Ruth, the beautiful young widow, seeking only a handful of grain at the gleanings; and, lo! she found a husband; and a most desirable husband at that. Desolate widow, the light of her life gone out, never struck a better match!

Along this road the bent and aged prophet Samuel came ostensibly to sacrifice a heifer at Bethlehem, but really to anoint David the grandson of Obed, Ruth's son, to be Israel's greatest king.

Along this road came Joseph and Mary. They were driven by the mandate of the great Augustus, that first Christmas eve, while the angels of heaven awaited the advent of the Son of God, born of David's royal line, in David's loyal town.

Along this road came the wise men, with gifts in their hands and worship in their hearts. There is a little spring, a poor little spring as it seemed to me, halfway between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Here the Wise Men saw the star and rejoiced with exceeding great joy, because it led the way to the house in which the young child lay.

Far to the east glorious glimpses are had of the purple waters of the Dead Sea, deep in the cloven recesses of the thirsty hills. These parched desert lands are the wilderness of Judaea.

To the west the hill country of Judaea smiles with abounding fertility. There are vineyards, orchards and gardens. The most beautiful countryside in the Levant is the hill-country about Bethlehem.

In the suburbs of the little town are fine houses with terraced slopes, and well-kept orchards. The guide shook his whip at them.

"American money," he exclaimed laconically.

"How did they make it?" I asked.

"That one on fruit. That one on rugs and carpets. That one on tobacco," he replied.

Bethlehem is a mountain town of about 11,000 people, Christians, almost to a man. And they look it. The streets are clean, the townsfolk neatly dressed, the shops well stocked, and the children seem unusually intelligent. These are worthy folk, like the Syrians of Lebanon, to whom I was ever partial.

In the midst of Bethlehem a dull square, paved with cobblestones, opened before the Church of the Nativity. We gazed upon that ancient building with awe. It is not beautiful, nor stately, nor a gem of architecture. But it is probably the oldest Christian Church in the world. Justin Martyr, who died 163 years after Christ, speaks of this church, as built upon the spot where Jesus was born. Here St. Jerome labored for years, living and dying (September 30, 420) in a small cave by the wall of the church. He wrote a library of theological books, but the civilized world re-

members St. Jerome as the author of the Vulgate. He gave the Scriptures to the Western World in their vernacular.

In this church Baldwin, a Belgian knight, was crowned "King of Jerusalem"; at the close of the First Crusade. He declined to be crowned in Jerusalem, because he said he would not wear a crown of gold where his Saviour had worn a crown of thorns—that is about all the world remembers of King Baldwin, but the sentiment does him honor.

Here, alas! as in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, we find three tribes of Christians huddled under one great roof, each hostile to the other. Oh! that these so-called Christians would learn something of the spirit of Jesus Christ! Oh! that they would fling away their mummery and prayer-books, pick up the Bible St. Jerome opened to them, and follow its teaching. As in Jerusalem, the Greek Church has the best of the situation. The Roman Church has a monastery hard by the church wall, and a cave under the church. As throughout the East the Roman Catholic Church is clean, the Greek Church is dirty, and the Armenian Church worse than dirty. I wondered what St. Paul would have said, if he had seen the vermin crawling over the oriental rugs in the Armenian church.

There are other things more disagreeable than filth and vermin, namely a plethora of holy lies. There is a spring under the church of good, pure water. When the Virgin and Christ-Child were thirsty a star fell from heaven and hit the ground so hard that it opened this spring! There is an altar where the Wise Men offered their gifts. There is another altar where Joseph heard the Lord speak to him, and still another where the blood

of the innocent children (the first Christian martyrs), slain by Herod, fell to the ground.

Near the birthplace of Jesus is a marble manger, and in it a doll, and the doll has a crown on its head! It is intended to honor Jesus. The bedizened doll especially irritated me. I wished to make away with it. It seemed a gratuitous sacrilege, more blatant and insistent than the other holy lies.

These altars, pictures and false stories are encouraged as aids to worship. One cannot blame the ignorant people, with child-minds for the most part, and almost wholly illiterate. Neither can one blame the parish priests. They have but little intelligence and less learning. The average parish priest in the Orient is but little, if at all, superior to the people to whom he ministers. But the leaders are responsible. The bishops and the hierarchy above them must know and do know that these childish tales are false. It is a matter of common knowledge. The leaders of the church must have direct and detailed information that a casual visitor has not. It is impossible for a western visitor, Protestant or Catholic, to acquit the hierarchy of the Greek and Latin churches of deliberate and far-reaching deception in holy things. Only on the ground that the end justifies the means can they be excused. Alas! the results of such mummary in itself alone considered, condemns such false practices even if the logic of principle and the plain prohibition of Scripture be left entirely without consideration. After centuries of experience the end conspicuously condemns the means.

We come to Bethlehem with thankful hearts for the great Truth, undisturbed by childish falsehoods, by ignorance or by superstition.

The noble front doors of the Church of the Nativity have been closed with brick, except one which has been closed with planks. One enters by a small door set in this portal. The vestibule too has been closed with brick walls. It resembles a prison vault. Within the nave, the elegance and simplicity of the building makes the poverty of the modern interior sadly conspicuous. Four rows of stately pillars lead down the nave. There are forty-four columns of red sandstone set on massive blocks of stone. The Moslems, to show their utter contempt for Christianity, used this church as a stable for their horses. The Greeks built a solid brick wall between nave and choir to protect the sanctuary. It is now



"Jacob passed this way and here his beloved Rachel yielded up her life when Benjamin was born. He laid her in a tomb which has been respected and protected by Jew, Christian and Moslem, alike."

partly removed, and it lends an air of crumbling dilapidation to the noble structure.

The high altar is erected over the cave in which our Lord was born. To the right is the Armenian wing of the church, the center and left are Greek. Each has a stairway descending under the altar. Candles were handed us, after a fee was paid, and we entered the narrow crypt. It is so small that twenty persons fill it uncomfortably. Against the rock of the hillside is an altar and under it a star with the words:

“Jesus Christus natus est hic de Virgine Marie.”

It is impossible to describe the feeling of awe that sweeps one's heart strings as he stands in this holy place. Without doubt this spot is authentic. The earliest writers and saints so believed. Modern scholars are agreed that Jesus was born in a cave under the hillside of Bethlehem.

We stood in long and reverent silence. Not a word was spoken. The candles flickered in misty drafts. Dim lamps hung about the cave gave forth more odor and smoke than light. The ornaments were tawdry. The hangings far too elaborate. We wished for the simplicity of Christ in this holy place. The oriental idea is to overlay all with tinsel.

In the deep gloom I had not noticed the soldier, a Palestinian, in British uniform. It is the law. There have been so many riots and so many quarrels here; and so many visitors have stolen holy ornaments and even cut the canvass that is spread over the rough walls that a guard must descend with every visitor.

We yielded up our dripping tapers and passed out of the church. To the east the hills

fall abruptly. Green pastures descend steeply toward the Sea of Death. The day was almost done. The sun hung low and long shadows were flung like soft mantles over the landscape. The Dead Sea was completely hidden in the twilight of dim distance, for in that deep gorge the sun had set.

These sloping pastures are called "The House of Watching," for here the shepherds watched their flocks by night. These hillsides are rich pastures still. Even as we stood and gazed the shepherds were gathering their sheep and goats into the protection of the folds.

The familiar words of Phillips Brooks run through my mind as we walked the narrow streets:

"O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see
thee lie,
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent
stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting
light;
The hopes and fears of all the years are met
in thee tonight."

"How silently, how silently the wondrous Gift
is given.
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings
of His Heaven.
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world
of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the
dear Christ enters in."

And then there is the cry of a lost and sin-

ful world that looks to Bethlehem for salvation; aye, and shall not look in vain;

“O little Child of Bethlehem, descend on us
we pray.

Cast out our sin and enter in. Be born in us
today.

We hear the Christmas angels the great, glad
tidings tell.

Oh! come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.”

XXIII.

THE DESCENDER.

The deepest scar nature has made on the bosom of the earth is that narrow gorge through which the Jordan flows. "Jordan" means "descender," and a rapid descender it is. It rises on the steep sides of Mount Her-



Fords of the Jordan.

mon. Three magnificent springs of clear and limpid water feed the nascent river at its birth. These are supplied, in turn, from the diadem of snow that forever falls and forever melts on the triple summit of the lofty mountain.

At sea level this stripling of a river rests for a moment in the lake known in Scripture as the Waters of Merom. It is mentioned only once, but that occasion is forever memorable.

When the sword of Joshua had mightily won the southern and central sections of the land the king of the Canaanite town of Hazor, a few miles west and above the lake, gathered a tremendous army to crush Joshua. Recruits came by thousands from Galilee, from the eastern highlands and even from the Hittite kingdoms of the north. The lake side seems to have been their rendezvous, perhaps because the land is level, the place central and sequestered. The Canaanites did not expect to fight there. They were not ready for battle. Joshua surprised them and fell upon them with fury. He won an easy and speedy victory in a single day. He pursued the fugitives far to the north and west, even to the gates of the great seaport, Sidon, beyond the Lebanons.

An excellent description of the lake is given in few words by the great expositor and traveler, George Adam Smith: "The open water of Merom is thickly surrounded by swamps and jungles of papyrus reed. From the lower end of the lake the Jordan enters the great rift below the level of the sea. It descends a narrow gorge in one almost continuous cascade, falling 680 feet in less than nine miles, and then through a delta of its own deposits glides quietly into the Lake of Galilee. Six

miles above the lake the river is crossed by the Bridge of the Daughters of Jacob, on the high road between Damascus and Galilee."

After sleeping again in the bosom of the exquisitely beautiful Sea of Galilee Jordan is ready for its last, long plunge.

For 185 miles the Jordan twists and turns like a serpent. Its rapid current tears at the rocks and frets the bluffs, washing away banks of mud and clay. The once clear water is sadly soiled.

It comes forth at slower gait upon the dreariest, loneliest and most plague-smitten spot on earth. It wanders amid deposits of slime and the mud of former floods and finds a wretched end at last in the Sea of Death. This the only river in Palestine, reminds one of a disappointed life. The young man starts forth fair and full of promise. But, alas, how void he is of fulfillment. He leaves his mountain home, clean, honest, innocent, but with lofty purposes and high ideals. Like Lot he looks not up but down. He descends into the abodes of men. Each turn, each change, brings him to a lower level. He hits the average of usefulness and morality; but, like the Jordan, he still descends. He pauses for a bit here and there, but sinks ever lower until at last he is lost on the dreary sea of death, without a friend to mourn him, nor a flower to brighten the gloom of his accursed end.

The Jordan is forever associated with the Baptism of John. And, naturally, for the ministry of the Fore-runner seems, queerly enough, to have been confined to this river. Three places are mentioned especially. He preached at Beth-abara, where the Valley of Esdraelon unites with the vale of Jordan.

Here all Galilee came to Him. He also preached at Enon in the mid-couree of Jordan, a locality forever memorable. Here, or near here, Elijah was fed by the ravens. He preached at the Fords of Jordan, where, to this day (especially at Easter) great crowds of people, especially the Greek Church followers, come to be baptized in Jordan.

Naaman the Syrian humbled himself to be healed in the Jordan. To look at Jordan is to understand Naaman better. Consider the intense bitterness with which the Syrians hate the Jews. View the beautiful rivers of Damascus, so pure, fresh and limpid, and then look upon the tawny, muddy waters of Jordan! Remember that Naaman was a haughty conqueror, and do not forget the inconsideration (not to say lack of courtesy) with which Elisha treated him. It was humiliation well rubbed in, and it was calculated to irritate the proud Syrian to the point of desperation.

The Fords of Jordan, a few miles from the Dead Sea and a few miles from Jericho, the great crossing from east to west, from desert to mountain, from Moab and Arabia to Jerusalem and the Mediterranean, is one of the historic and strategic sites of the East.

The most casual traveler is struck by the bareness of this accursed land. Evidently there are seasons when the Jordan swells and inundates the plain, leaving bars of sand and rock and brush piled indiscriminately here and there. In August the Jordan is a peaceful, yellow stream; about an hundred feet wide. Its banks are thickly wooded with a rank growth of willows, birches, sycamores and other trees and bushes. In a small leaking

boat we paddled to and fro, and around a graceful bend.

At the Fords of Jordan Israel entered upon the conquest of the land, coming 3,000,000 strong from the fastnesses of the desert. Here the waters parted and the host marched over dry-shod.

To the Fords of Jordan Elijah came on his way to Heaven. He smote the waters with his mantle and they parted. Elijah and Elisha went over dry-shod. To the Fords Elisha came, again, alone. He folded the mantle, which had dropped from his master's shoulder and cried in genuine grief, "Where is the God of Elijah?" The waters parted at this unique ejaculation and Elisha passed over, alone, dry-shod.

The Fords of Jordan witnessed one of the saddest scenes in David's life. Here he rested for the first night in his flight, before rebellious, victorious Absalom. Faithful Joab watched over him. And here a few months later Absalom came marching, as he thought, to a splendid victory, as it proved to swift and well deserved defeat.

The Fords of Jordan witnessed many crossings by Jesus. How often, no one knows, as His blessed feet traveled back and forth. Surely this is a place of matchless memories; Joshua, David, Elijah, Elisha, Naaman, John the Baptist, Jesus.

Descending from Jerusalem, the mountain passes opened as the throbbing of the cheap automobiles clicked off the miles. The excellent military road and the downward grade invite speeding. The waters of the Dead Sea are beautiful and tranquil as death is often beautiful and tranquil. The intensely dry air

makes distance deceptive. Mile after mile and the waters appeared no nearer. But all roads have an end, and we stood at last upon the coarse, pebbly beach by the waters' edge.

A few miserable shacks, inhabited by a few miserable Arabs whom government service keeps in this oven, a few boats that seemed placed upon the water for they stood up as a boat stands forth in dry dock.

To the right, the west, the naked hills and barren ravines of the Wilderness of Judea climb to the vicinity of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron.

To the left, the east, the mountains of Moab rise like a solid wall of masonry. We are now at the lowest depression of earth, 1,300 feet below sea-level. The mountains of Moab rise 2,500 feet above sea-level. As I gazed at their lofty heights I thought again of noble, discouraged John the Baptist. On one of these lofty crags Herod and Herodias had their palace. There for eleven months the brave Fore-runner pined in his lofty, lonely prison, from which, no doubt, his eye swept daily these lands and the beach on which we stood. There his head rolled from his body and there his devoted disciples gathered up the mutilated corpse, buried it, and went and told Jesus.

I thought, too, of Moses. When his work was done God led him to one of these lofty peaks and showed him the Land of Canaan. Then God touched him as a mother caresses her child, and Moses slept.

“By Nebo’s lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan’s wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab,
There lies a lonely grave;

“And no man dug that sepulchre,
And no man saw it e’er,
The angels of God upturned the sod
And laid the prophet there.

“This was the grandest funeral
That ever passed on earth,
But no man heard the trampling
Or saw the train go forth.

“Without the sound of music,
Or voice of those who wept,
Silently down from the mountain’s crown
The great procession swept.”

From such ecstatic memories we descended to the prosaic pleasure of a bath in the Dead Sea.

The water is crystal. The wavelets have a slight amber tint, not so decided as the amber color of Lake Drummond and the juniper water of the swamps of the South. To the taste it is as bitter as Epsom salts. And it is as saline as bitter, and as oily as saline. Your hand feels like you had touched kerosene.

Our bath would have been pleasant had not the sun been so fierce. One feels as he floats on the water that he is made of cork. It is impossible to sink. It sounds unreasonable, but one lies upon the surface as one lies on a feather mattress, and sinks into it but little, if any more. The water is 26 per cent solid matter; one-fourth the consistency of a rock!

Some one has estimated that the Jordan delivers six and one-half million tons of water daily to the sea. It is all carried off by evaporation. Nor is that strange. This vast, sultry, desert, caldron, under a cloudless sky,

heated like a furnace, is fifty miles long and ten miles wide.

Some antiquarians believe that the Dead Sea covers the site of the ancient, wealthy cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; and that the fire of God rained from heaven after the departure of Lot was a terrific volcanic explosion. I rather incline to this explanation for all details of geography, chronology, geology and theology are satisfied and articulate well.

Over this, the most wicked spot on earth, the fearful, ominous pall of an age-long curse hangs still. Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

It is only a few miles to Jericho, a land that was described by Roman travelers as the fairest spot on earth. It lies now in widowed desolation and the empty barrenness of centuries. Hills, once green with terraced vineyards and gray with the rustling leaves of the olive, are painfully bare, seamed, bald and scorched. The rich city, a jewel tossed about by the princes of earth, has lost its lustre. It is a flower withered and decayed. The few inhabitants are beggars smitten as with a plague.

And yet the muse of history held the sceptre here. This was the city 'around which Joshua marched thirteen times in solemn procession before the crumbling walls fell flat.

Joshua laid a prophetic curse upon it. If any man rebuilt Jericho the Lord would smite his eldest child when the restoration was begun and his youngest child when the work was finished.

Centuries later, while Ahab was king, a man named Hiel moved down from the mountain town of Bethel and rebuilt Jericho. God had not forgotten. Hiel laid the foundation of the

city in the death of his eldest son, and when he set up the gates his youngest son died.

Anthony presented this city and plain to Cleopatra. The Enchantress of the Nile had ever an eye to business. (She was a Greek, you know.) She sold Jericho to Herod, her inveterate enemy. He greatly embellished and beautified it, lived, ruled and finally died here. When dying he had seventy of the wealthiest and most influential men of the nation imprisoned and beheaded, that there might be mourning throughout the land at his death.

In the days of our Lord Jericho was at the zenith of its splendor. He often passed this way. Here He called little Zacchæus down from the sycomore tree, here He spoke the parable of the pounds, the setting of which story probably had an historic reference to Herod the Great, and here He healed Blind Bartimæus and the other beggar by the side of the Jerusalem road.

XXIV.

JANNES AND JAMBRES.

Since the days of Heroditus it has been customary to say that Egypt is the gift of the Nile. And that is true. Egypt is the oldest of old lands. She is the mother of the mothers of civilization. Our alphabet may be traced through Latin and Greek channels to the banks of the Nile, and can be traced no further. All civilization likewise and all history leads back and further back until you reach the land of Egypt—then no further. Egypt is the land of ultimate resort; beyond her lie only fathomless shadows of age-long mystery.

The Nile rises in the lofty, snow-capped mountain of Central Africa under the very eye of a burning, equatorial sun. Like a huge serpent it crawls hither and thither between vast deserts, searching an outlet to the sea. Only the perpetual flow of its mountain-fed waters holds the deserts apart. If one could look down upon the sinuous pathway of the Nile from some heavenly height, he would see a narrow strip of green lace laid upon yellow cloth, as soft as satin, fretted by the fronds of a million palms. But as the Nile approaches its end its waters drop the burden of soil, which they have carried from the heart of fertile Ethiopia. This deposit, laid by the ocean's side, in an immense triangle is the richest land on earth. The Delta of the Nile is the cradle of civilization. The Egyptian sun rises every morning over the silent, mysterious wastes of the Arabian desert. It sets in the violet clouds of the far west, behind the rolling billows of

Sahara's sea of sand. From desert to desert, from silence to silence, from mystery to mystery, that is the career of an Egyptian day. And who shall say it is not the career of every man's brief day?

"Man in his strife and beneath him the earth
in her green repose,
And out of the silence he cometh,
And into the silence he goes."

A poet has likened the Delta to a green fan, and Cairo to a pearl set upon the handle. It is true that Cairo is at the narrowest point of the valley. The citadel, erected by our old friend and gallant enemy, Saladin, crowns a hill to the east. The pyramids stand on the edge of the Sahara to the west. Between these heights lies the vast African metropolis, within whose miserable hovels more than a million people live and die.

Like Constantinople and Damascus, Cairo is one of the chief seats of the Mohammedan religion. In fact, the Moslem missionary propaganda, which has been so successful in Central Africa, has its headquarters in the so-called University of Cairo. On either side of Cairo lie two ancient Egyptian centres, Memphis and Heliopolis. Each is practically a suburb. Memphis was the political and Heliopolis the religious capital of the innumerable Pharaohs.

Between these two ancient seats the Mohammedans built their city. With hands ruthless, ever, everywhere and always, they destroyed magnificent temples, costly palaces and ancient pyramids, obelisks, pillars and monuments of a precious and historic antiquity to build the filthy hovels of this vast, squalid city. It is merely another instance of

the heart-breaking blight laid upon beauty, art, learning and literature by the Moslem. Islam blasts the higher and nobler impulses and efforts of every land and nation which it touches.

It should be said, however, that by the side of the mediaeval, Moslem, Arabian Cairo a modern European, Christian city, is building. The broad boulevards, ornate private homes of wealth and luxury, the cool, green parks and garden spots, the palm-girt avenues with elegant administrative buildings, suggest Paris, Lisbon and other handsome capitals.

It is a unique experience to step from one age and civilization into another. Cross a street, walk not an hundred feet, and you pass from the twentieth century to the ninth. It is as though an expert magician had hypnotized you with his wand. Look about! Gone are all evidences of cleanliness, order, wealth and civilization. About you are squalor, filth, dirt, desolation, ruin and decay. Naked children and malodorous goats fight in the reeking streets for the garbage flung carelessly from windows



The Citadel of Zion, Jerusalem.

or doors. From some minaret nearby the be-whiskered, wild-eyed, dirty-skinned muessin (holy man!) calls the faithful to prayer.

Magicians are here as in the days of Moses. In the contest before Pharaoh, Aaron threw his rod on the ground and it became a serpent.

The Egyptian necromancers threw their rods on the ground and every rod became a serpent. But Aaron's serpent swallowed the serpents of the necromancers. When Aaron picked up his serpent, lo, it was a rod again!

He stretched this rod of authority over the waters of the Nile and instantly all the water in Egypt became blood! It was the first plague. Jannes and Jambres, the chief of Egyptian magicians, held forth their rods, and water became blood.

Aaron stretched forth his rod again and frogs swarmed from every waterside until the land was reeking with the pest of loathsome frogs. It was the second plague. Jannes and Jambres also brought up frogs; though I suspect that was not difficult. Had they shown real power they would have used their wands to make the vile pests disappear. This, of course, they could not do, and were evidently too shrewd to attempt.

The third plague came upon Egypt when Aaron smote the dust and lice swarmed throughout all the land on man and beast, an affliction worse than frogs. When Jannes and Jambres attempted to duplicate this plague they failed utterly, and attempted to discredit Aaron no more.

He entered the lobby of the hotel, a youth of twenty, clad in a long gown of soiled silk. A reticule like the ordinary shopping bag of

a fine lady swung from his wrist; ah, but its contents would have been the envy and delight of a typical American boy. Such a variety of articles as that small bag contained! The head of a tiny white rabbit peeped from it. The magician walked about the lobby behind the Americans clucking as one calls chickens and stroking the rabbit's head affectionately.

"It is Jannes," I cried in real delight, for I love a magician. The classic shell-game, the flower that blossoms before you as you gaze, the yards and yards of ribbon and the live duck that are pulled from the hat-band of an embarrassed spectator hold for me an unfailing fascination that brings joy to my heart as in the days of youth.

Jannes had no need of a stage. He kneeled on the marble floor of the lobby. He, too, had the shell-game and the growing flower. He, too, tossed a coin into the air, and later plucked it from the shoe-top of an innocent spectator.

He asked for a silver piece. I found a franc, closed my hand upon it, held it tight, determined to emulate Moses and Aaron and outwit this son of Jannes. He covered my fist with his silk handkerchief and covered the fist of a friend with another small silk handkerchief; he invoked the aid of the white rabbit, beat a tiny drum, whisked off both handkerchiefs, and, lo; I was holding tenaciously a bit of tin the size of a franc, and though neither I nor my friend had opened our clenched fists, he held my silver franc securely in his hand.

Jannes next produced a card with three black spades upon it. He rubbed his thumb

across the card and two spades disappeared, leaving an ace.

"Jannes," I cried, "with that trick you could easily win every cut-glass vase for which our ladies spend countless hours over tables of auction bridge. With that trick you could outwit the shrewdest gamblers of Saratoga, Atlantic City or the resorts of the South. Ah, Jannes, why so poor with the open sesame of such potential wealth on the stub of your dirty thumb?"

Let none of the fine ladies nor expert gamblers be disturbed, however, for we left Jannes securely anchored in the submerging poverty of Cairo.

Next evening another arrived in much the same manner. He had served, he said, with the British in India. As an interesting prelude he hammered a six-inch spike into his head through one nostril. It did not seem to interfere with the functions of his brain.

"Lo, Jambres is here," I cried with enthusiasm. He borrowed a cigarette, broke it into two equal parts. Lit both and smoked them a moment. Without touching his mouth with his hands he gave a great gulp and bolted the burning cigarette stumps. Jambres then laid his head back, as one gargles for sore throat, and the smoke rolled out of his opened mouth as from the miniature smoke-stack of a locomotive, puff by puff. He gave a hectic cough, caught one of the lighted cigarette stumps, still burning, between his teeth, smoked it, spat it out, coughed again, produced the second half, also burning, smoked that and spat it out, his hands all the while held behind his back.

"Jambres," I exclaimed, "you are a mar-

vel. With you I could tour America and sell more bottles of Smith's Cancer Cure or Jones' Killum or Curum than the laboratories could manufacture. With you, Jambres, I could put on a side show that would make Ringling pale into insignificance. Here as a mark of my admiration and esteem is the silver franc I rescued only yester e'en with great difficulty from the tenacious grasp of your unknown brother Jannes."

XXV.

THE WANING CRESCENT.

Mohammedanism has received its death blow. It is not that the false prophet has lost his power, nor that his fanatical adherents are ready to turn to Christianity, nor that there will be no Moslems in the world the next hundred years or two; but the crescent is waning. Every passing year will see its influence, numbers and prestige decline. Mohammed will never again be so potent a factor in the religion and politics of the world as he has been these twelve centuries gone.

I.

Mohammedanism has ever been a political system as well as a religion. It has never existed and cannot exist without a state. The last and the greatest state was Turkey. So long as the Sultan of Turkey sat upon his throne (and it made no difference to the ignorant Moslem how insecure that throne might be) there was a unity, a head to that religion. With the passing of Turkey all prestige is gone.

I asked an educated and intelligent Moslem in Cairo, "What effect will the fall of Turkey have on your religion?" I saw instantly that I had touched a joint in his armor. "The fall of Turkey," he replied, "is temporary. The Sultan will rule again from Constantinople all the lands that have been lost, including Syria and Egypt. Allah will re-establish his power."

"My friend," I replied, "I admire your sublime optimism. You hope well in spite of stubborn facts. But if you live to see the years of Methuselah you will not live long enough to see Turkish power re-established. Turkish power is dead, save as a third-rate state."

The significance of that Moslem's logic was his instinctive and tacit admission that Islam's only hope is in a Moslem state. The political power of the Turk, like the temporal power of the Pope has gone—absolutely and forever! Without temporal power the Catholic Church lives and thrives. Without political power Islam is doomed.

II.

Mohammedanism has ever made its most potent appeal and gained its converts from idolators, pagans and other heathen. Its most successful theatre today is in the black heart of Central Africa. Mohammedanism was a long stride upward for idolatrous Arabs, fire worshippers of Persia and devil worshippers of Africa. There is much truth in Islam. Much of the Koran is exquisitely phrased. The most potent error is a half truth. Let me quote some of the verses from the Koran which our guide read to us from the walls of a magnificent mosque in Cairo.

"Do not do to other people what you would not have them do to you."

"It makes no difference where you are buried, God is there."

"Everything waxes, only God endures."

"We come here empty and empty we go."

"When a man prays, Allah, holds him between his hands."

Of course it takes no great scholarship to trace the sources of Mohammed's morality and the origin of his fine phrases. Yet it is a vast stride for an Arab, Hindoo or Hottentot to accept a religion with so large a content of truth.

Missionaries of the Cross are now to be found in almost every land. Islam's future success at proselyting grows less with each new missionary that goes forth, each new station opened, each hospital, school, printing press and church established. Islam can win over heathen people. It cannot win over Christian peoples. In a thousand years with everything in its favor, when it possessed the passes of the Pyrenees and the gates of Vienna it did not then win Christian peoples. Now Mohammed possesses no gate, not even a back gate.

III.

The crescent is waning because of the startlingly rapid advance of science, education, commerce, transportation and the opening of vast areas hitherto closed to western civilization.

We journeyed toward Jerusalem a hot July afternoon. We watched at every rise of the road and the rounding of every turn for a glimpse of our City of Dreams. We felt as if we were the crusaders of old. When the embattled hosts caught their first sight of Jerusalem they fell upon their knees and thanked God. One who journeys seven thousand miles over land and sea to win that sight sympathizes with the crusading spirit. At last our patience was rewarded. We saw the domes, the minarets, the walls and towers of Jerusalem! As we gazed down upon them from the mountain summits

of the north, an areoplane rose from the heights of Olivet, swept over the Temple area, encircled Mount Zion and disappeared toward the British barracks on the road to Bethlehem.

Islam may prosper and grow powerful in the ignorant, sequestered desert recesses of Arabia, but Mohammedanism and flying machines cannot and will not flourish together. The British lieutenant—if he were a British lieutenant—who flies over Jerusalem has a place in the progress which spells death to Islam.

There is a railway from Aleppo and Damascus, south bound. It skirts the Arabian deserts and ends at Medina. Telegraph wires now enter Mecca. These products of Christian civilization must impress the dullest fanatic. Every achievement of Christian civilization is a sinister suggestion of the stagnation and death that has ever followed the footsteps of Mohammed. They understand it. More and more is the logic of the situation borne in upon even the most ignorant of them.

IV.

Woman is at last coming to her own in spite of Mohammed. They were preparing for an exposition of woman's handicraft work which has since been held at the seaport town of Haifa. Such a movement is unprecedented in the Levant. The Lord High Commissioner, himself, Sir Herbert Samuel, opened the exposition (January 27, 1922).

The idea of women in industry is a new one in this land. Before the great war woman was considered a burden. Her place was the jail-like home which she would not dare to leave, save by special permission from her lord

and master. The more ignorant Mohammedans believed that a woman has neither brains nor soul. She is to be treated as an animal, bought and sold instead of being married for love.

All is changing. Women are now demanding and receiving equal rights in the home. They have cast aside customs, defied tradition and embarked upon fields of labor tabooed a few years since. They have definitely entered industry, and are consequently relieved, in part, of the economic dependence which has bound them for centuries.

V.

Our dragoman lives in Jerusalem. He and his family are an institution. He wears a fez and wraps his head in oriental fashion. He wears a dress, a long, loose robe of silk. He is as thoroughly oriental in spirit and thought as in appearance.

He is an Episcopalian. Throughout Syria and Palestine evidences of the efficient work done by the Church of England are apparent. That mission work is the hope of Palestine. They have carried Jesus Christ again to the land that received Him not. Some (as for instance this large and influential family of professional and expert guides) have received him. More and more they will turn to Him.

In the suburbs of Jerusalem, the Church of England has a splendid school, St. George's. It is taxed to its capacity, especially since the war. The sheiks, nobility, aristocracy and richer classes of Arabia wish an English education for their children. They not only request but demand entrance to this school.

"But," I protested, "are not these Arabs Mohammedans?"

"Yes," replied our dragoman, "they are Moslems, but they want their children taught English."

"But do they not know that their children will likely become Christians, if taught in English schools?"

"Since the war," replied the guide, "there has been a change. The old folk will remain Mohammedans, but they are willing for their children to become Christians—they see the difference since Allenby came in."

The man who made that statement knows. He lives under the shadow of the school. He speaks, reads and writes Arabic, and travels constantly over the Levant. He is thoroughly conversant with the situation.

VI.

Where are the Turks? For eight centuries they ruled and ruined these lands, once the richest on earth. I expected to see Turks in Beyrout, Damascus, Jerusalem and Egypt. There were Syrians, Arabians, Armenians, Jews, French, English, Italians, Greeks Palestinians, Egyptians, Negroes and Americans; but never a Turk.

An American, who resides in Jerusalem, said, "The Americans have a total misapprehension about the Turks. There were never any Turks here except the governing class. They came and went, as the English in India. They did not mingle, nor intermarry with the natives. Before the evacuation the Germans left. We had many Germans for a while. After the Germans the Turks left. They are gone as

completely from Palestine as the Saracens from Spain."

Their roads, buildings, some of their customs, laws, some of their words remain; but the Turks are gone completely, and forever.



The approach to the University of Cairo is by a narrow, filthy lane. The grand entrance is about as large as an ordinary church door.

VII.

In our party was a clergyman who had visited Palestine in the summer of 1914.

"I have never been so surprised as in the change everywhere visible among the Moham-

medans," he said. "In 1914, they were insolent, now they are polite. In 1914, their mosques were crowded; now they are empty. In 1914, if you met a Moslem on a narrow street, he would not budge, the Christian dog must step aside; now they act like whipped curs. In 1914, they would not permit Christians to enter their holy places; we were shut out of many mosques; now they are willing for Christians to come, and anxious, if they can get a few piastres as a fee. In 1914, the city rang with their wild calls to prayer, five times daily; now the calls are faint and unobtrusive."

I had never visited a Moslem land before, but I found them uniformly spiritless, docile, polite, never aggressive. The Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem is the most sacred place in the world to a Mohammedan, except only Mecca. The Moslems retain it as before the British came. The English flag flies over all the land. English soldiers keep order in the streets, English money circulates in trade and the English language is heard increasingly in the bazaars, but England never disturbs the prejudices of her subjects. England is wise and tactful. Of all things, she wants peace.

Twice we visited the Mosque of Omar. I expected to see it crowded with fanatical Moslems. I expected to see pilgrims there from the four quarters of Islam. To be sure, we did not go on Friday, but on both occasions the Mosque was deserted. There was not one solitary worshipper at prayer, not one! We had the Mosque to ourselves on both visits.

Nor was there one in the magnificent El Aksa built over Solomon's quarries. We saw a few praying in the mosque in Damascus and

Cairo. Ten years ago these famous mosques were crowded.

VIII.

The intellectual life of Islam has always centered in the University of Cairo. All have heard of that institution of learning. Our American newspapers carry squibs from time to time to the effect that the University of Cairo is the largest educational institution in the world. It is exceedingly impressive to say that the Mohammedans maintain so great a university, 12,000 students. One thinks of Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburg, Harvard, Hopkins, Princeton. One is apt to conclude that the Moslems are not so ignorant after all, if they foster such an institution. This University, such as it is, is the center of Moslem aggressive propaganda. From it missionaries go forth by hundreds to Central Africa, Persia, India and China. As Constantinople was the head, Cairo is the heart of Islam.

Of course, I visited the University. I am deeply interested in all institutions of learning.

The school was in vacation for the waters of the Nile had just begun to rise and holidays were proclaimed throughout the land. Still, one might fairly appraise the great University.

The approach is by a narrow and filthy lane. We picked our way through heaps of vile-smelling garbage, goats, dogs and naked children. The great entrance is about as large as an ordinary church door. We paid two piastres (8 cents) as an entrance fee. As the place is holy an attendant tied holy rags, or slippers, over our shoes. Within we crossed an arcaded court paved with cobblestones. Some classes

were in session. The teacher sat on the ground. He held a switch in one hand and a book in the other, whether spelling book or Koran I do not know. The University students were little boys and girls from six to eight years of age! They squatted on the ground for all the world like ducks in a row. Each would recite his verse, as one says a sentence from the Catechism. If the child did not recite correctly the teacher slapped him on the face with his palm or the switch. When a ragged, brown-eyed boy of six made a mistake the brutal teacher slapped him with unnecessary force. My blood boiled, for I have a brown-eyed boy of six in my own home. I longed for the strength and opportunity to punish that cruel "professor" as he deserved, and he deserved the severest a man could give him. The cruel stroke left a red mark that did not fade so long as we watched them. Another class of similar size and attainments were making letters on tin slates as our tots learn A, B, C. The children pay one piastre (4 cents) a week tuition—I think they pay all their education is worth.

We passed into a large mosque. I should reckon, at a venture, it was 200x400 feet. A famous sheik was teaching a normal class near the pulpit. They sat in a circle on the floor. Our guide spoke in low, awed tones. The gentleman in fez, turban and pongee shirt was very distinguished and learned. He was evidently explaining the Koran to his pupils, all of whom were mature men, some old men. Nothing is worthy of study save the Koran; and the way to study the Koran is to memorize it.

In a far corner a University student was

washing his clothes and hanging them on a line to dry—within the holy precincts of the great University Mosque! Men in filthy rags lay asleep in the corners, covered with flies and vermin. Such is the University of Cairo.

No stream rises higher than its source. This is the intellectual citadel of Mohammedanism. It is not strange that its fruits are everywhere degradation, filth, disease, stagnation, ignorance, fanaticism and decay, mental, economic, political, military, moral, physical and spiritual.

An expert observer, Donald Maxwell, in a recent book, "The Last Crusade," has this trenchant criticism of Turkish rule, and the Mohammedan religion:

"You may travel up and down the country and look in vain for one good thing that the Turk has done, one trace of art, one piece of architecture, one contribution in any way to science or knowledge. The Turk cuts down, but never plants. The great irrigation works which made Mesopotamia the granary of the ancient world were not allowed to decay until the Turk came. The blight of Turkish rule descended like a destroying plague. If a man by private enterprise did something to irrigate his land and improve his crops, the Turk came down like a wolf on the fold as a tax collector, so that the last state of that man was worse than the first, and no one dared follow his example."

IX.

Mohammedanism has been the only rival of Christianity. Other religions, as Judaism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Brahamism do not and have never made a universal appeal. Moham-

med alone sought to rival Jesus Christ. The crescent alone sought to supplant the Cross.

In the days of Charles Martel when the Saracens swept over the Pyrennes and into the plains of France the Cross seemed in danger of extinction. But today the Crescent is waning. Turkey staked all on the issue of the late great war. She signed her death warrant, and that of Islam. Mohammed has received his death blow.

The End.

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